PRIESTLY VOCATION AND TONSURE

L. BACUEZ

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PRIESTLY VOCATION
AND
TONSURE.

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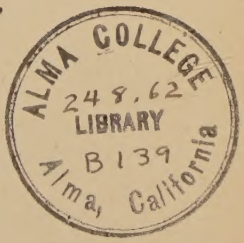
BY

L. BACUEZ, S. S.
Author of the "Divine Office."



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To the Memory

of

THE VERY REV. DANIEL E. MAHER.

Late President

of

ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY,

Brighton,

Mass.

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FOREWORD.

The reasons for offering this translation are—as they should be—its need and, in consequence, its utility. There is nothing quite of its kind in English. Wherefore in our country, where aspirants to the priesthood must make a goodly part of their training in colleges where the influence is worldly rather than ecclesiastical, it is the exception that has anything but a hazy notion of his calling. In fact it is not of rare occurrence that the student learns of Tonsure and the character of the clerical state for the first time only after entering the seminary. The development of a true clerical spirit is, however, of absolute necessity, and often this means a radical change. Anything that will help to this is certainly invaluable. This little book has a proven efficacy in this work; for much depends on the preparation made for each successive ordination. The aspirant who has a good understanding of each Order he receives and is imbued with its

spirit, is blessed indeed. This book treats exhaustively of the first step in the clerical career, both as to instruction and meditation, being the ripe fruit of a rich experience.

The translation has of necessity been made freely with considerable adaptation, and the chapter on clerical dress quite rewritten. May the reader find in the work some inspiration and help to a true and enduring priestly spirit.

Brighton, Feast of St. Agatha, 1908.

J. V. N.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

If one compare these instructions on Tonsure with those of Fr. de Lantages, there will be noticed a marked relationship which we do not wish to deny, or even dissimulate.

The work of that holy priest breathes such a spirit of faith and religion, it reproduces so well the teachings of Fr. Olier on the "Priesthood," and one finds therein such unction and wisdom, a doctrine so elevated and pure, that at first it was our intention merely to give out a new edition, with some modifications. But on second thought it seemed that the interests of ordinands would be better subserved by making a new redaction along the same general lines but with such adaptations as the present day temper of mind and conditions require.

We have preserved for the most part the form of dialogue because the treatment of the subject by question and answer best seemed to meet the pur-

pose of the author. Moreover, it does away with artificial connections and purely formal transitions without interrupting the sequential treatment of the subject. It permits also more lucid explanation and broader development, and this especially commended it to us. We trust that our readers will, with us, appreciate and approve our preference for this manner of treatment.

Our reason for adding a number of meditations on the same subject is twofold: to furnish clerics and aspirants to the priesthood with suitable meditations, whatsoever be their rank in orders, and to inculcate deep in the soul of every ordinand those principles of ecclesiastical life which have already been set forth in the instructions.

To be thoroughly impressed and imbued with the truths of faith, prayer is indispensable. They must be reflected upon at leisure, the reasons seriously weighed, the consequences foreseen as far as possible, firm and definite resolutions as to conformity of thought and act must be taken, and finally fervent aspirations made in order to bring down upon one's self the graces of Heaven, without which it is impossible to strive for or maintain the perfection of the clerical life. For if it is profitable to

study and read, still more profitable is it to have recourse to God, to invoke His Holy Spirit, and to render one's self worthy of His communications.[1] Pure and humble souls gain more through prayer than study.[2] A ray of God's illuminating grace which brings a truth home to our souls, a word of that interior voice, feebly uttered perhaps, but which comes from heaven to our groping hearts, or a pious emotion making us to forget self and hasten to God, gives us more light and strength and leads us farther on the road to sanctification than all the tomes and treatises written.

We have designedly refrained from developing these subjects of meditation at length. What young ecclesiastics need is, not so much to fill their minds with a great stock or fund of ideas, but rather to learn how to pray, to treat frankly heart to heart with God, to reflect, and to draw from out the depths of their own souls worthy thoughts, pious affections, and good practical resolutions. Inspirations aris-

[1] Quid prodest sanctorum scripta legere, nisi ea ruminando usque ad cordis intima transmittamus? (St. Bern. *Scal. Claust.*, XI.) Utilis lectio, utilis eruditio, sed multo magis utilis unctio quae docet nos de omnibus. (Id., *Ibid.*)

[2] Qui a Christo didicerunt mites esse et humiles corde, plus cogitando et orando proficiunt quam legendo et audiendo. (S. Aug., *Epist.* CXLVII, 1.)

ing in the soul are of more practical and effective worth than any suggestion that may come from outside. One maxim well learned and appreciated is incomparably better than any number superficially cognized. And furthermore if the considerations we give be really insufficient for certain minds, they can be eadily and satisfactorily supplemented by referring to parallel passages in the Instructions.

Through ordinations by a bishop the Church receives her ministers and priests. On the dispositions of the ordinands depends in great part the measure of grace they will receive, and, consequently, the good they will accomplish in the holy ministry. Wherefore, we think, nothing greater or worthier can be purposed than to aid those called to ordination in preparing themselves worthily and well: "*Spes messis in semine.*"

PART I.—INSTRUCTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

TONSURE AND ITS RANK IN THE CHURCH.

I.

BY WHOM INSTITUTED AND BY WHOM IT CAN BE CONFERRED.

It is the persuasion of the Church, says the Roman Catechism, that the origin of clerical tonsure reaches back to apostolic times.[1] St. Jerome[2] and St. Augustine[3] make mention of it as a general usage, and St. Gregory of Tours, who attests to its universality in many of his writings, attributes its institution to St Peter himself:

[1] Quod quidem ex Apostolorum traditione acceptum esse docet Ecclesia, cum de ejusmodi tondendi more vetustissimi et gravissimi Patres meminerunt. (*Catec. Conc., II, De Ord.*)

[2] Precor coronam tuam. (*Epist. ad S. Aug. CXLII.*)

[3] Per coronam nostram et coronam vestram. (*Ep. ad Procul. XXX, 5.*)

"*Caput desuper tonderi instituit.*" A considerable number of the early doctors, St. Isidore of Seville, the venerable Bede, and all the ecclesiastical writers of the Middle Ages are of the same opinion. Thomassin, who thinks differently, still acknowledges that the rite of Tonsure was a universal practice at the time of St. Augustine, and moreover, confesses that he does not know at just what period this ceremony did originate.

As regards the power of conferring Tonsure, that belongs properly to those who have received from Our Lord, together with the plenitude of the priesthood and the authority to communicate it, the charge to rule the Church of God and to govern its ministers.

II.

IS TONSURE AN ORDER?

Externally the ordination to Tonsure bears much resemblance to those which follow, but as regards the effect which it produces, it differs essentially. For, whereas the other ordinations confer Orders, that is to say, certain supernatural powers which have for their object the worship of God and the sanctification of souls, and which are necessary for

the authoritative exercise of ecclesiastical functions, Tonsure has no other effect than to withdraw the recipient from the ranks of the simple faithful and to incorporate him into the clergy, thereby consecrating him in a more perfect manner to the service of God and the Church.[1] Consequently, of itself it confers no authority nor any power; it merely places the recipient in that state in which he must be to receive Orders. It engages him in the preparation, and aids him in the acquisition of those qualities and dispositions which Orders require.[2] It is as the Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches when it says that Tonsure is the preparation for Holy Orders, even as the novitiate prepares for the religious profession, exorcisms for baptism, and betrothal for the sacrament of Matrimony.[3]

[1] Ad dicendum divinas laudes non præexigitur aliqua potestas Ordinis, sed solum quædam deputatio ad hoc officium. (S. Thom., *Suppl.*, *q.* 40, *a.* 2.)

[2] Non est Ordo, sed præambulum ad Ordines. (S. Thom. *Ibid.*)

[3] Ut homines ad baptismum exorcismis, ad matrimonium sponsalibus præparari solent, ita tamquam aditus ad Ordinis sacramentum illis aperitur. (*Cate. Conc.*, part II, *De Ord.* 26.)

III.

IS IT THEN A SIMPLE FORMALITY, A PURELY EXTERNAL CEREMONY, AND OF INDIFFERENT WORTH AS REGARDS THE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION?

Although it has not the efficacy of a sacrament, the ordination of Tonsure is no mere formality, without efficacy, or without value to the soul. It is a holy ceremony and acts upon the soul of the ordained in divers ways.

1. By way of *monition.* What instruction could be more practical for those to be ordained, or what more appealing exhortation could be made them to lead a pure and fervent life? What subject for reflection could be more enduring? It is not for a mere moment that the appearance of the tonsured is changed, but for life? Nor is it merely a change of costume that takes place, but of the person himself, and in a manner most impressive; "*Clamat vestis, clamat professio sanctitatem.*"[1]

2. By way of *supplication—prayer.* The prayers which are offered for the sanctification of the Tonsured are said at the foot of the altar by the

[1] Opp. S. Bern. *De modo bene vivendi.*

representative of the High Priest of the New Law in the name of the entire Church, and petition for the most precious of graces; v. g., purity of intention, love of God, zeal for the interests of Our Lord, fervor, and finally a complete renewal of heart, together with an unwavering constancy in the practice of virtue.

3. As an *initiation into the clerical life.* This ordination, consecrating the Tonsured in a special manner to the service of God and imposing upon him special obligations, warrants his expecting from Heaven light and grace proportionate to the dignity received and the duties imposed, since the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God require that He accord to His servants such help as they need and as they are disposed to profit by it.

Therefore, one cannot esteem the ordination to Tonsure too highly, nor prepare oneself with too much care for receiving it worthily.[1]

[1] Qui timent Dominum, præparabunt corda sua, et in conspectu illius sanctificabunt animas suas. (Eccli., II, 20.)

IV.

WHAT THE NAMES "CLERIC" AND "ECCLESIASTIC" GIVEN IN TONSURE SIGNIFY.

The title of "ecclesiastic" implies that those ordained have given themselves to the Church to be her ministers, and that they have renounced all profane occupations that they may serve her better. The name "cleric" comes from a Greek word κλῆρος which signifies "share" or "portion." This implies that the cleric has taken the Lord as the only portion of his inheritance and that thereby he himself becomes the particular property of Our Lord. Moreover, these names which the Tonsured bear, are in themselves exhortations to sanctity. For to be perfect, the bearers must live in such a manner as to verify their signification or be guilty of falsehood.

Here is how Fr. Olier expresses these truths to young ecclesiastics: "Though all places in the world belong to the Lord, since His dominion is unlimited, still there are certain places distinguished from the rest as properly belonging to Him, and are called His temples, His sanctuaries, because they are dedicated

in a special manner to Him. And again, though not a day passes which does not belong to Him Who is the Immortal King of Ages, there is, nevertheless, one of the seven which is truly the Lord's Day, and by us observed as consecrated to the worship of His Divine Majesty. In like manner, though all Christians are in truth the portion of the Lord, as compared with infidels who are the children of Satan, still clerics are in a more excellent way the property of God, because it has pleased Him to choose them from among the laity and to withdraw them from profane occupations and thus to dedicate their persons and consecrate their lives to the divine functions of His sanctuary. Wherefore, from the point of view of vocation and dignity, there is not a whit less difference between the laity and the clergy than there is between a common week-day and the Sabbath, between an ordinary dwelling house and a church." "Oh, then, you of the clergy," adds this holy priest, "strive to appreciate your condition. Respect your dignity. Beware lest you desecrate your persons, and cherish always deep down in your hearts this remembrance; that you belong solely to God, that you have been consecrated to him, and bear in mind—that, in de-

taching your thoughts and affections from Him in order to pursue worldly aims and frivolous amusements, you are abusing holy things"![1]

V.

THE CLERGY AND ITS INSTITUTION.

The clergy, "*clericorum gens*," is in the Church what the nobility, or at least, the magistracy is in the State. As regards its essentials, that is to say in so far as it composes an hierarchy entrusted with the care of the faithful and the worship of God, the clergy dates back to the very origin of the Church and is part of its constitution. It was established by Our Lord Himself, and its institution is bound up with that of the priesthood and the Divine Sacrifice.

"At the Last Supper," says the Holy Council of Trent, "on the same night when He was delivered unto His enemies, the Divine Saviour declaring Himself a priest forever according to the Order of Melchisedech, offered to God His Father, His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine:

[1] Clericus qui Christi servit Ecclesiæ, interpretetur nomen suum et nitatur esse quod dicitur. (S. Hieron., *Ep. ad Nepot.* LII, 5.)

then under the same species He gave them to His apostles whom He ordained priests of the New Testament: and by these words, *Do this for a commemoration of me,* He confided to them and to their successors in the priesthood, the office of offering henceforth in the same manner His Divine body and blood, even as the Church has always believed and taught." [1]

And it adds,—"The sacrifice and the priesthood are so inseparably united by the dispositions of Providence and Divine institution, that never at any time did one exist without the other. Having therefore established in His Church the visible sacrifice of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ must have instituted at the same time a new priesthood, that is, an order of ministers entrusted with the celebration of the Divine Sacrifice, and destined to supersede the priesthood of the Old Law." [2]

The Council concludes: "As all is divine in so august a ministry, it is befitting that it be exercised with all possible dignity and religious ceremony; and to this end there should be in the organization of Holy Church a certain number of minis-

[1] Sess. XXII, *De Sacrificio Missae,* c. 1.
[2] Sess. XXIII, *De Sac. Ord.* c. 1.

ters, of different orders and occupations, all engaged in the exclusive service of the altar, but varying in degree of subordination so as to form several distinct ranks in a complete hierarchy. Thus we see that Holy Scripture mentions not only priests, but deacons as well, and we note also in the Sacred Writings specific and most explicit directions and counsels as to the ordination of each. And even from the earliest days of the Church we find mention of the inferior orders of sub-deacon, acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter, each having its peculiar function."[1]

Those merely clerics, not being invested with any order are not included, properly speaking, among the ministers of the altar. Nevertheless they form part of the clergy; and, as there are, according to St. Thomas,[2] certain of the sacred functions which the clergy exercise in common and in which all the members thereof participate, it must be said, that the Tonsured co-operate in the quality of ecclesiastics in the divine worship and the sanctification of souls.

[1] Sess. XXIII, 2.
[2] St. Thom. *Supp. quæst.* 40, *a.* 2.

VI.

HOW IS THIS SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD AND INCORPORATION IN THE CLERGY ACCOMPLISHED?

In a manner at once real, effective, and external —but not, however, irrevocable.

The effect of ordination is not merely to detach the heart from the unbelieving and corrupt world; it withdraws the ordained entirely from the secular state, separates him from the laity, and gives him another rank in the church. It places him above the ordinary faithful and in a condition which has its own particular aims, obligations, privileges, and spirit.

This separation, however, is not definitive. The position of a Tonsured cleric is much the same as that of a novice at the time of his *debut* into religious life.[1] It does not suppose that he is absolutely certain of his vocation, for if his dispositions change, and he recognizes that he has made a mistake, there

[1] Novitiatius est mutuum experimentum quo religio ex una parte experitur an expediat novitium admittere, et novitius ex altera parte an vota religionis in tali ordine prudenter emitteret. (BOUVIER, *De Decal.* c. II, Art. 3, sect. 5.)

is yet time to remedy the evil. The Tonsured is free, as is the novice, to retract and assume once more the secular habit. It follows of course that in foregoing the advantages of the clerical state, he also relieves himself of its obligations and resumes that rank in society which he formerly held.

VII.

PRIVILEGES OF THE CLERICAL STATE.

They are many and various. When one takes upon himself in Tonsure certain responsibilities towards God, the Church, and society, it is but right that in return he should acquire corresponding rights and privileges in the regard of society, the Church, and God.

1. *In civil society.* The principal privileges of the clergy have been, from the very beginning, immunity from secular duty and exemption from common taxes. As soon as she could well do so, the Church demanded these privileges for the honor of her ministers, and Christian princes entered so readily into her views that her petition in no way compromised the principles and customs then received.

In all States, as we know, divers orders exist, each of which has, as it were, its own proper legislation and magistracy. The nobles have their own tribunals, even as the military men of to-day, and the Church argued that it was but right that ecclesiastics should enjoy like privileges, for the same reason that we think it only natural that one should be tried by his peers. And besides, since the clergy impose upon themselves greater sacrifices than do the nobility and at the same time render no less service, it seems only just to accord them some remuneration; wherefore, since exemption from taxes was an honorary privilege and as suitable as any that could be offered, this was decreed and accepted. In fact this disposition of the matter is so well founded in justice that even in our present day societies which recognize the principle of equality of all men before the law, the sentiment of equity still retains in favor of the clergy some relic or remnant of ancient immunities. So it is also that clerics cannot be prosecuted before ordinary tribunals for faults committed in their ministry, and have been exempt even in these latter days from military service and from certain duties little compatible with their functions, e. g., tutors, jurors,

etc. Furthermore, in some countries priests employed in the holy ministry receive allowances for their support, and even simple clerics themselves partake of the appropriations by the government in favor of seminaries and other religious establishments. Thus clerical privileges have obtained for eighteen centuries in conformity with the principles laid down by St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

II. But it is *in the Church* that the cleric finds his proper rank and is invested with honors and privileges. As mediators between Heaven and earth, and devoted as they are to functions most august and holy, the Tonsured are entitled to the respect of all, and, it may be added, the interests of sacred ministry demand that this respect be paid. Nay, the Church has strongly declared in their favor and avers that to outrage an ecclesiastic is to outrage Him whom they represent, and even anathematizes whosoever would menace or assault them.[1]

2. To this special protection Mother Church adds various and more precious advantages; the

[1] Si quis suadente diabolo in clericum manus violentas injecerit anathematis vinculo subjaceat et nullus episcoporum præsumat illum absolvere, nisi mortis urgente periculo. (*Caus.* 17, *q.* 4, *c.* 29.)

canonical fitness for the reception of Holy Orders, for the exercising of jurisdiction, and the for participation in benefices and ecclesiastical revenues. Also, before initiation into sacred orders, the Tonsured are made fit to have some share, however slight, in the government of the Church. They could exercise a spiritual authority over the faithful, whether as delegates, or in their own proper capacity if they have received any commission or canonical title, as has frequently happened heretofore. Then, too, the simple clerics, composing, together with those in sacred orders, a single body, have with them a place in the sanctuary before the altar, and as the sanctuary is the image of Heaven, they are in the eyes of the faithful, what the angels of God are to inferior creatures. Therefore, let them appear as the angels around their King, robed in the vestment of glory and innocence.

III. Lastly, it is almost needless to say the reception of Tonsure privileges the cleric in the sight of God Himself. It certainly draws down graces and benedictions both many and precious. Of this we have a twofold guarantee: the honor of God, greatly concerned in that these young ecclesiastics have all the aid necessary for bearing

their dignity with honor and for the acquisition of virtues proper to their state of life; and secondly, the prayers of Mother Church, which ask for them at their ordination with confidence and fervor, a complete renewal of spirit and heart, a life pure and zealous, a virtue that shall be exemplary, and a holiness never to be compromised.

Thus is seen the esteem in which the ordination to Tonsure is deservedly held, and with what humility and gratefulness it should be received.

VIII.

IS THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE TRULY THE MOST EXCELLENT AND MUST ONE REALIZE THAT IN EMBRACING IT HE IS OBLIGED TO LEAD A LIFE MORE PERFECT THAN WHEN IN AND OF THE WORLD?

That this is a truth wholly incontestable is shown by various considerations.

First. Ecclesiastics are devoted by reason of their state to functions most august and holy; how then can they be otherwise than obliged to conduct themselves consistently with their ministry, which is, to lead a life pure and unattached to earth?

Secondly. They represent Jesus Christ in this eminent dignity. They are the successors of the Apostles, the immediate disciples of the Saviour, and of the first deacons whose lives are recorded for us in Holy Writ. Need it then be proven that those who aspire to be successors in such a ministry engage themselves to imitate their virtue, and are we not justified in seeking in every ecclesiastic a reflection of the faith, the religion, the charity, and the zeal of those early models?

Thirdly. In Scripture we read that God required of the Jewish Priests and Levites pure and holy lives: "*Sancti erunt Deo suo, et non polluent nomen ejus.*" Yet the priesthood of the Old Law was but a shadow of the Christian priesthood. Can any less virtue be required of the Priests and Levites of the Church? Must not one aim at perfection of life in order worthily to exercise such a ministry?

Fourthly. How should clerics be otherwise than obliged to surpass in sanctity the laity, since, according to St. Thomas, they are expected to attain a greater degree of perfection than is demanded even of the religious life itself.[1] For in truth, such is

[1] Major requiritur sanctitas interior quam requirat religionis status. (S. Thom. 2 *a.* 2 *æ.*)

the assertion of the holy Doctor, and from it he draws the conclusion that the faults of an ecclesiastic are more grave than those of a simple religious. And he adds, that the crown with which the Church decorates her clerics is a mark of pre-eminence in virtue no less than in dignity, because he who is destined to the divine ministry, is called to the highest perfection, even as his employment is the most sublime.

Fifthly and finally, nothing can better help to an appreciation of the sanctity required of a cleric than a consideration of the titles bestowed upon the clergy by serious and noted writers. "Sacratissimus ordo, ordo angelicus, divina militia, sors sanctorum, terra sanctorum, perfectionis professio, senatus Ecclesiæ, Ecclesiæ corona, pars membrorum Christi prima." Such are the names by which the holy Doctors and the councils of the Church address not only the consecrated ministers, but all those as well who have the honor to be in the service of the Church and to belong to the clergy.

IX.

DOES THIS OBLIGATION EXTEND TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY, EVEN TO THE TONSURED SIMPLY?

This obligation devolves upon all, without exception, even though it be not of equal rigor for all. St. Jerome commenting upon the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus says very aptly that there is a strict obligation, not only for bishops, priests and deacons, but for exorcists, lectors, porters, acolytes and all those as well who belong to and serve in the House of God, to neglect nothing that would aid them in rising to a perfection of life above that of the simple faithful.[1] The Holy Council of Trent is neither less explicit nor less urgent. This is how it speaks in its fourteenth session: "The bishops shall remind the members of their clergy, of whatsoever rank they be, of their obligation to give edification to the people by their conduct no less than by their doctrine." In the twenty-second session it declares that ecclesiastics, being called to have the

[1] Non solum episcopi. . . debent magnopere providere. . . verum etiam. . . . et omnes qui domui Dei deserviunt, quia vehementer Ecclesiam Dei destruit meliores esse laicos quam clericos. (*Caus.* 8, *q.* 1, *c.* 21.)

Lord as their Father as well as to be themselves the Lord's particular portion, ought so to watch over themselves and their manner of acting that nothing may be seen either in their apparel or in their deportment, in their living or in their language, which would not bespeak gravity, modesty and religion; and furthermore that, by their fidelity in the avoidance of even the least faults they may inspire in the faithful respect and veneration.[1]

It will be permitted us here to cite by way of example an edifying story in connection with the subject of Tonsure, as told by Devie, bishop of Belley, who seems to have known it from actual experience.[2]

"A youth of about twelve years or so, belonging to a wealthy family which was but half Christian, was, as often happened before the Revolution, destined by his parents to enter the ecclesiastical state. As he had still all the candor and innocence of his age, he wished to learn with what design one should seek to embrace the clerical state and what he would become on receiving Holy Tonsure. The confessor to whom he had recourse told him, in a

[1] *Sess.* 22, *De ref.*, c. 1.
[2] *Mémorial du Clergé.* **Meditation VIII.**

way that he could understand, that he would be consecrated to God, just as his elder brother, a soldier, was consecrated to the service of the king. These words made a deep impression upon him. Henceforth he conceived that he ought to do for the service of God even still more than did his brother in the service of the king; 'For,' he said naively, 'God is far greater than the king.' As it happened that his brother came to spend a furlough with his family, the youth plied him with questions about the military state. He wished to know why his brother wore a habit different from that of other people, what were his occupations, what he read, why was he not always enjoying holiday, why he went through his exercises so often; if he would be obliged to go to the front in time of war, and if he ought to die rather than quit his post when he was on duty. Each of his brother's replies was to him a light and an exhortation. Not content with engraving on his memory all that he learned, he applied it to himself and drew therefrom certain rules of conduct. He wished to wear nothing but the clerical habit, just as his brother wore a uniform. He assisted at all the offices of the Church, because, he said, they were equivalent to military

exercises. As his brother had told him that he studied the lives of soldiers most distinguished for their ability and their bravery, so he set himself to studying the lives of holy priests and to imitating their example. At length, the Revolution having broken out, the soldier went to death in the service of the king, and, the clergy finding that they had the alternative of giving up life or of taking a sacrilegious oath, the young cleric preferred to make to God the sacrifice of his life, thus to give the best proof of his devotion to his Sovereign Master to Whom he had consecrated himself."

In treating of each Order in particular, we shall show that for every ecclesiastic who has received one or all there exists the obligation of living holily in the practice of Christian virtues. We shall make it clear too that this obligation which begins with Tonsure, increases gradually with each step that is taken in the priestly career. Wherefore it is that the Tonsure, which, where worn, is as the external mark of clerics and the symbol of their consecration to Our Lord, should be enlarged at each ordination and develop by degrees even into the fulness of the priesthood which is the episcopate.

X.

WHAT TO REPLY TO THOSE WHO OBJECT THAT MANY ECCLESIASTICS DO NOT SEEM TO BE IN A STATE OF EMINENT PERFECTION.

One can make three answers:

1. It is not here a question of what *is*, but of what *ought to be*. In moral matters, and especially where moral perfection is concerned, one should never expect to find that practice conforms perfectly to theory; yet the indocility of the subject, or the weakness of the will are no reflection on the just and true worth of the rules of clerical life.

2. The perfection of the individual person and that of his state are two very different things and often very unequal. Though not in a state of perfection, one could still be very perfect; this is very often to be seen in the lives of many holy lay persons. So too one could be very imperfect even though he be in a perfect state of life. In asserting and demonstrating that the clerical state is the state of highest perfection, we are very far from pretending that every cleric surpasses in virtue every religious or lay person. Without stopping at

comparisons or judgments which are always more or less odious, we are to be content with saying that he is the most perfect who loves God most perfectly, whatsoever be the state in which Providence has placed him.

3. True ecclesiastics know well that the perfection of their state, sublime as it is, does not warrant any self-esteem whatsoever, nor any preference of themselves to any one whosoever he may be. They think only of humbling themselves, seeing that they are so lacking in the sanctity which they should have.[1]

Nevertheless their defects and their weaknesses do not discourage them. They see in them the means which they have for making advance in virtue. They have recourse to God in humble, fervent, constant prayer. They inspire one another and mutually sustain each other. They take inspiration from the example of those who have trod the ways of sanctity before them, or who have given edification by fidelity to their vocation. Whatever in fact may be the unhappy state of the times, or the coldness of fervor, they strive, as clerics ought,

[1] Quanto magnus es, humilia te in omnibus. (Eccli., III, 20.)

ever to keep before their eyes those ministers of God who honor their state and whose virtue corresponds to their dignity. And should one come across some of those unfortunates who have entered the clerical state without a vocation or who have lost the spirit, that is no reason for misjudging the sanctity of the clerical state or lowering the idea which one has conceived of it. If the state were less holy, it would be a less sin so to disgrace and profane it.[1]

XI.

IS IT OF CONSEQUENCE THAT ALL CLERICS BE VIRTUOUS AND FERVENT?

Most certainly, for it is a condition whereon depend the honor of God and the sanctification of souls. Ecclesiastics are the chief organs of the Holy Spirit and the ordinary channels of grace in the Church.[2] If the organs are healthy, if the channels are pure, as they ought to be, the divine

[1] Peccantis magnitudine peccatum omnes metiuntur. (S. Chrys., *De Sacerd.*, L. III.)

[2] Crescamus in illo per omnia qui est caput Christus, ex quo totum corpus compactum et connexum per omnem juncturam subministrationis, augmentum corporis facit in ædificationem sui in caritate. (Eph., IV, 15.)

life circulates freely and abundantly from the head to the members, and brings forth fruit in abundance; but if the organs are injured or unhealthy, if the channels are found to be destroyed or obstructed, then everything languishes, everything wastes and withers, and everything suffers grievously. It seems that the Savior ceases to live and act in His members, and grace yields its sway to the flesh and the world. Wherefore the most excellent work that an ecclesiastic can do is to sanctify himself in preparing for Orders, and to incite his brethren to a like preparation; and the better one can do this, in whatsoever state he be, in so far is he doing his best to contribute to the good education and perfection of the clergy.

Such is the conviction which a zealous priest, who did much to reanimate fervor in the sanctuary during the 17th century, strove energetically to inculcate. "You do a better work," said he to some generous Christians of his time, "you render a *far truer* service to your Church, in seeing to it that the clergy who serve her live in an ecclesiastical manner, than in giving her ornaments of gold or of silk. That vanity may find this maxim to be of bitter taste, is quite possible, but they

who have even a little faith will acknowledge its worth. For my part, there is not an ornament so precious that I would not put on sale, were it in my power and necessary, to form such ecclesiastics as the Church requires. I do not say this off hand but from reflection and with the same sincerity of heart wherewith I celebrate the Mass. Nay, who will form a St. Dennis, or a St. Martin and will not be accounted as having done incomparably more for God and the souls of men, than if he had enriched every sanctuary with vessels of gold or precious stone? Rather would I willingly leave a thousand laics to form one good cleric who might some day be a St. Francis Xavier, or a St. Charles; for it needed but a St. Charles to sanctify a diocese and a St. Francis Xavier to convert whole provinces and kingdoms."[1]

A religious of the same epoch, truly zealous for the glory of God and well advanced in the ways of perfection, Father Rigoleu of the Society of Jesus, thought likewise that the sanctification of a cleric is preferable to that of fifty lay persons of the very first quality. His biographer relates that, finding himself ill at Quimper and utterly unable

[1] Bourdoise, *Sentences et Maximes Ecclés.*, lib. I, c. 1.

to relieve himself, he invoked St. Corentin, one of the Apostles of Brittany, and offered to work in the training of the clergy if his prayer for health and strength necessary to carry on that work were granted him. At once he heard an interior voice which said to him, "Go, then, and instruct eccleciastics," and he felt that health had been restored to him. From that moment he wished to live only for clerics, convinced that God prolonged his days only in consideration of the services he could render to them, that they might receive and exercise well the Holy Orders.[1]

XII.

ARE THERE ANY CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE LEGITIMATE RECEPTION OF TONSURE?

It is evident that God does not call all men indiscriminately to become His ministers, and that those who ought to become such are not always in the dispositions required for solemnly consecrating themselves to His service.[2]

[1] Life and Works of Father Rigoleu, S. J.

[2] Ne quis forsan irregularis, aut alias a jure prohibitus aut non descriptus, examinatus, approbatus et nominatus,

For the legitimate reception of Tonsure, there are two essential conditions:

1. To have sufficient assurance that one is called to the clerical state;[1]

2. To be well prepared for ordination.[2] If one or the other of these conditions be wanting, one would do very wrong to present himself to the bishop, for thereby one would render himself culpable before God, and would expose himself to many mistakes and bitter regrets.

ullo pacto audeat ad suscipiendos ordines accedere. (PONTIFIC. *De Ord. Conf.*)

[1] Prima Tonsura non initientur nisi de quibus probabilis conjectura sit eos, ut Deo fidelem cultum præstent, hoc vitæ genus elegisse. (CONC. TRID., *Sess.* XXIII, *De Ref. c*, 4.)

[2] Qui accedunt ad Dominum sanctificentur, ne percutiat eos. (EXOD., XIX, 22.)

CHAPTER II.

VOCATION TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.

XIII.

WHAT IT IS TO BE CALLED TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE BY GOD, AND ON WHAT THE NECESSITY OF A VOCATION IS FOUNDED.

Vocation is primarily an act whereby the Divine Wisdom calls anyone to a particular state or employment. It is the part of God to call, that is to invite, to counsel, and at times to command. He who does not believe himself to be thus called, would do wrong to enter the clerical state.[1] He would be not only indiscreet, imprudent, but culpable.

Why? Because to intrude into that state without being called is simply to go counter to the designs of God on a point of paramount importance. It is to arrogate to one's self a dignity to which one has no right, and the disposition of which Our Lord

[1] Quos elegerit Deus, appropinquabunt ei. (NUM. XVI, 5.)

reserves to himself. It is to enter upon engagements which one is not able to fulfil; to make subservient to natural satisfactions a supernatural ministry which God has established for His glory and the good of souls; and finally, to put one's self in obvious and imminent danger of profaning the holy mysteries, of giving scandal to the Church, and of deserving eternal damnation.[1]

Formerly, they were regarded as gravely culpable who presented themselves for Tonsure solely to be of the clergy and thus to enjoy a benefice without entering into Sacred Orders. But how much more guilty are they who receive Tonsure without a vocation and with the purpose of presenting themselves at further ordinations, even to that of the priesthood!

XIV.

HAS THIS DOCTRINE OF THE NECESSITY OF A VOCATION A SOLID FOUNDATION IN HOLY SCRIPTURE?

We are able to cite, in support of this doctrine, the most formal testimonies and the most convinc-

[1] Qui non intrat per ostium sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro. (JOAN., X, 1.)

ing examples, from both the Old and the New Testament.

I. According to St. Paul, the priesthood is an honor which no one may rightfully arrogate to himself, and can be legitimately received from Heaven only: "*Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem.*" The Apostle makes neither exception nor distinction. Had one all virtues and every talent; had he the purity of an Angel, the zeal of an Elias, the austerity of a John the Baptist, were he a genius or a worker of miracles, nothing could supply the character of the Order and nothing could give a title thereto but the good pleasure of God. His will is the sole motive which can legitimate an ordination, as His power is the sole cause which renders it efficacious, and the only source of its fruitfulness: "*Nec quisquam sumit . . ., sed qui vocatur a Deo.*" [1] This is the doctrine taught by Our Lord in the allegory of the Good Shepherd already cited. "The good shepherd," says He, "enters by the door into the sheepfold. Those who enter otherwise are thieves and robbers." [2] Then He adds, "I am the

[1] Hebr., V, 4.—

[2] Qui intrat per ostium pastor est ovium; qui non intrat per ostium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro. (Joan., X, 2.)

portal, that is to say, it is I who give entrance to the shepherds into the sheepfold. Whoever enters through Me will be saved. He can come and go and will meet with no obstacle to the success of his ministry."[1] Therefore, according to the Scriptures, neither flesh nor blood, nor pride, nor interest, nor ambition, nor any human consideration should induce us to enter the sanctuary. Nor should we be led into Holy Orders through motives of protection or favor. Our Lord alone can call us thither and it is only after we have received command from Him, or upon His invitation, that He permits us to present ourselves: *"Hic aperit et nemo claudit, claudit et nemo aperit."*

II. Examples are not wanting in support of these assertions.

1. The Old Testament first. From among all the personages who have been called upon to fulfil some religious and supernatural function, we shall be content to consider but Aaron and the ministers of the Levitical worship. Did they arrogate to themselves their sacred functions? Or did

[1] Ego sum ostium. Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur, et ingredietur et egredietur et pascua inveniet. (JOAN., X, 10.)

Moses appoint them of his own accord? Rather was it not God Himself who, by a positive disposition, assigned them? *"Aaron et filios ejus constitues super cultum sacerdotis."* [1] And He adds, that if any stranger dare dispute this heritage or pretend to share it with them, he will be struck dead: *"Externus qui ad ministrandum accesserit, morietur."* [2] And in fact we see in the Book of Numbers that Core, Dathan, and Abiron, having attempted this sacrilegious usurpation, experienced the severity of God's threat, for they were consumed by fire in the sight of all the people.[3]

2. The examples of the New Testament are even more striking. Our Lord did not merely institute His priesthood, but He appointed each of those in particular who were to exercise it, and with it He Himself invested them freely, spontaneously and at the moment He chose. He selected them first, according to His good pleasure.[4] And after

[1] Apoc., III, 4; Num., III, 10.
[2] Num., III, 10; XVIII, F.
[3] Num., XVI; Ps. CV, 1 F. Superbi illi Levitæ, Core, Dathan, et Abiron condemnati sunt ut posteris daretur exemplum ne quis præsumptione superbi spiritus non sibi a Deo datum munus invaderet. (S. Aug., *Serm.* XXX, spp.)
[4] Vocavit discipulos suos et elegit duodecim ex ipsis. (Luc., VI, 13.) Vocavit ad se quos voluit ipse, et venerant ad eum. (Marc., III, 13.)

seeing them long tried and proven, He invokes upon them the Divine Spirit, and twelve of them He called to the Apostolate, and seventy-two to a less exalted ministry, having, however, as its purpose the spread of the Gospel. "You have not come of yourselves to me," He says to them a little later, "but it is I who have called you and placed you in a state where you are to work and bear fruit." [1] The Apostles understood so well the reason and purport of this commission that they felt it their duty to act up to it as best they could. When there arose the question of filling the vacancy made in their midst by the death of Judas, they realized that his successor was already appointed in the Divine decree, and that for them there was but one thing to do; to obtain a manifestation of Heaven's choice: "*Et orantes dixerunt*: *Tu, Domine, ostende quem elegeris*" [2] Wherefore we may know that even after His return to the bosom of His Father, the Divine Master still cares for His flock and by the movement of His Spirit appoints the dignitaries and ministers in His Church: "*Ipse dedit quosdam*

[1] Non vos me elegistis, sed ego elegi vos et posui vos, ut eatis et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat. (JOAN., XV, 16.)

[2] Act., I, 24.

apostolos, quosdam autem prophetas, alios autem pastores et doctores.[1] . . . *Posuit Episcopus regere Ecclesiam Dei quam acquisivit sanguine suo.*" [2]

How, then, could one fail to see in the priesthood a purely gratuitous favor? How could one regard as other than guilty of usurpation and sacrilege him who would presume to arrogate to himself this dignity, when one realizes that the Incarnate Son of God, in order to exercise legitimately and efficaciously its functions, and to represent us properly before His Father and to make an acceptable expiation and prayer in our behalf, had first to be called to that ministry by a free ordinance of the divine Majesty? Yet such is the doctrine that St. Paul declares to the Church in the most express terms. Not Aaron only, but Jesus Christ Himself had to be called by God to the exercise of the Pontificate: "*Tamquam Aaron, sic et Christus. Non semetipsum clarificavit ut Pontifex fieret, sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu. . . Tu es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.*" [3]

And further, though there have been heretics, and though a great number can find their condemna-

[1] Eph., IV, II. [2] Act., XX, 28. [3] Hebr., V, 5–6.

tion in the very principles we just set forth, yet we do not see that any of them ever dared question these same principles. The Council of Trent merely gives expression to the unaminous and constant persuasion of all Christian ages, in declaring that they are to be looked upon as thieves and robbers and not as true ministers of the Church, who would have the temerity to intrude into the Sanctuary without passing through the portal, the only portal which can rightly give entrance thereto.[1]

XV.

THE PERIL OF A MAN WHO ENTERS THE CLERICAL STATE WITHOUT A VOCATION.

As long as a sinner has not departed from this world, in whatever state he be, or whatever the crime he may have committed, it is always possible for him to regain the state of grace and thereby be saved.[2] But what must be realized is this,

[1] Quin potius decernit eos qui ea ministeria propria temeritate sibi sument, omnes non Ecclesiæ ministros, sed fures et latrones, per ostium ingressos, habendos esse. (Conc. Trid., *Sess.* XXIII, c. 4.)

[2] Bonus Dominus propitiabitur cunctis qui in toto corde requirunt cum et non imputabit eis quod minus sanctificati

that, as a matter of fact, very rarely after entering the clerical state without a vocation, have sincere and effectual conversions taken place. "One can say with assurance," says a pious writer, "that of the twelve Apostles called by Jesus Christ Himself, there was one who lost his soul; but who will assure us that of twelve engaged in the work of the ministry without a vocation even one attains his salvation?"[1] It may well be feared that a person may deceive himself as regards the fault he would thus commit or the peril in which he would find himself, or indeed that he may fail of courage to make such sacrifices as he feels to be necessary to get out of the unhappy predicament wherein he is.

For he will of necessity have to make sacrifices to return to a state once quitted, and these sacrifices require considerable effort. At the time even when one is still on the threshold of the clerical career and when one is free to return to the secular state, it is painful to acknowledge one's mistake, to retrace one's steps, to renounce the projects one has formed, and to break off the engagements one

sunt. (II, PARAL. XXX, 19.) Tanta est pœnitentiæ medicina ut mutere videatur Deus suam sententiam. (St. Amb. *De Pœnit.*, II, VI, 48.)

[1] Cf. DUPONT, *De perf.*, Tract I, C. S, 51.

has taken. And how much more so when one is bound indissolubly by Sacred Orders and when one can no longer think of seeking in the world any compensation for the sacrifices which conscience demands! There would then be no time for hesitation as to what course to pursue, if it were clear that one lacked a vocation or that it were impossible to acquire the qualities necessary in a minister of the Church. It would simply be a case of cutting off the hand, as Our Lord says, and of plucking out the eye to save the body and soul.[1]

XVI.

IS IT A GREATER IRREGULARITY TO ENTER THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE WITHOUT A VOCATION THAN TO REMAIN OUTSIDE, WHEN CALLED?

The two are very different. To enter the clerical state without a vocation is to transgress the most formal of laws and to expose oneself to grave peril; it is to put oneself in such a position as to violate

[1] Si scandalizaverit te manus tua, abscide illam. Et si oculus tuus scandalizat te, ejice eum. Bonum est tibi debilem, claudum, cæcum introire in regnum Deo quam duos manus, duos pedes, duos oculos habentem mitti in gehennam ignis! (Marc., IX, 42, 46.)

necessarily at each instant, the most sacred duties; to trifle for the time with the designs of God, the interests of the Church, and the salvation of souls.[1] To turn a deaf ear to the call of grace and not respond to a priestly vocation does not involve the same transgressions nor expose one to the same dangers. True, he whom Our Lord deigns to call to the priesthood, and to whom He says clearly, "*Ascende superius*",[2] does wrong to refuse, whatever be his motives. He goes counter to Divine Providence, always infinitely wise and jealously careful of all concerned.[3] Nevertheless, one cannot

[1] Ne spondas supra virtutem tuam. (Eccli., VIII, 6.)

[2] Luc., XIV, 10. Pastorale munus est sollicitudinis et periculi plenum; sed si offici ac Redemptori nostro placuit has in augustias, hæc in pericula nos vocare, ecquinam sumus ut possimus ei dicere; Cur ita fecisti? Qui nos dilexit et animam suam pro nobis posuit, dicere dignatus est Petro et in eo pastoribus omnibus; si me amas, pasce oves meas: ecquis erit qui respondere audeat: Nolo pascere oves tuas, ne perdam animam meam, nisi sit aliquis qui non Deum sed seipsum amat? (Bellarm., *Ad Henric. Episc. Verd.*)

[3] Væ qui contradicit fictori suo! (Isa., XLV, 9.) Quis restitit ei et pacem habuit? (Job, IX, 4.) Væ filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium et non ex me, et ordiremini telam et non per spiritum meum, qui ambulatis ut descendatis in Ægyptum. (Isa., XXX, 1.) Non utique transire in Ægyptum criminosum est, sed transire in mores Ægyptorum. Qui eo transit descendit; et qui descendit, cadet. (S. Amb., *Ep.* XXVIII, 8, *ad Iren.*)

affirm, for ordinary cases at least, that he who feels called is under a rigorous obligation, because God does not usually call men to the holy priesthood by positive commands, or because, in common parlance, he who has the qualities necessary for acquitting himself of the duties of the priesthood, will not be less capable of fulfilling his duties in an inferior state. His wrong doing would be in not having chosen the better part, rather than in having chosen ill. Though he has not taken the most sure road to Heaven, it does not follow that he is on the road to damnation.

From this observation we can only conclude that to enter without temerity into the clerical state, it is essential that one be able to say with prudent judgment that he is called. As long as one has not a settled conscience in this regard, one ought to refrain from anything definite; and, if he must determine or take a definite step, then the choice should be of the less perilous course, that is, of the less perfect state.

XVII.

CAN IT BE SAID THAT A VOCATION IS NECESSARY FOR ANY STATE IN LIFE, AND THAT BEFORE EMBRACING A PROFESSION, EVEN SECULAR, EACH PERSON IS UNDER OBLIGATION TO ASK OF GOD TO WHICH HE IS CALLED?

This doctrine is incontestable from whatever point of view we take it.

1. Considering God as the author of society, it is inconceivable that He should not will the propagation of all those professions society requires. But could He be said to will their propagation, if He did not design a certain number of subjects to fill each profession, and if He did not give them in each instance the special aptitudes and talents therefor?

2. When you look upon God as your Creator, can you doubt that, in placing you in this world, He has destined you to occupy some particular place and to exercise a certain function? Furthermore, are you not certain that that place and function are determined, since it is impossible that all should suit you equally, and that the will of God, infinitely judicious, cannot remain indifferent or

undecided where there are questions of adaptability and worth necessarily unequal.

3. You are led to the same conclusion if you consider God as the Absolute Master and Sovereign Legislator. One must admit that His will should be the rule of our life, and that, if we wish to act wisely and prudently, as becomes an intelligent and responsible being, we ought to direct our every step according to His precepts and counsels. But if this be so, if one ought to have this intention in ordinary actions, transitory and of little importance, how could one permit himself to neglect this safeguard when it is a question of a choice of state of life, that is to say, the determining of that which practically directs all our acts and which must have the gravest consequences, both in this life and in the next?

4. The same inference must be drawn if it should please you to look upon the matter from a supernatural view, considering God in that He is the author of grace and the arbiter of salvation. In this quality, what He wills most of all is that man sanctify himself and be saved. This is the end to which He directs all His plans; this is the only thing necessary in His eyes. How can He do other than

will that we have the same views as himself, that we strive for the same end and that, in order to reach it, we take the most direct and sure roads?

Hence, from whatever side we view this doctrine we are compelled to acknowledge that each one is called by God to a particular position and state in life, from which no one can keep away or withdraw without some culpability and risk.[1]

To be logical, one must even go farther and extend to each duty, each function, however transitory it be, what we have said concerning the different professions. As all states are far from affording the same means of serving God and practising virtue, neither do all the functions and occupations afford equal guarantees or equal facilities for working out one's salvation.[2] And would not he be culpable, who would arbitrarily or blindly decide such a matter when there is so much at stake and when such grave risks are incurred?[3]

[1] Unusquisque proprium donum habet; alius quidem sic, alius vero sic. (I, Cor., VII, 7.) Unusquisque sicut vocavit Deus, ita ambulet. (I Cor. VII, 17.) Ego Dominus vocavi te in justitia, ut aperires oculos cæcorum, et educeres de conclusione vinctum et de domo carceris sedentes in tenebris. (Isa., XLII, 6–7.)

[2] Sunt plura negotia quae sine peccato exhiberi aut vix, aut nullatenus possunt. (S. Greg.)

[3] Elige viam quam curras. (S. Amb., *De Off Min.*)

"From Paris to Rome are two roads, one by land and one by water. Put a boat upon the land and a hundred horses will scarcely bring it to Rome. But put it on the sea and with a little aid, by following the course, it will go almost alone. This simply illustrates the truth that to gain an end one must always take the proper means." (*Bourdoise.*)

Of course it cannot be said that every profession, or each pursuit requires of those who wish to enter it the same self examination and deliberation as does the clerical state. Though nothing is to be undertaken without reflection, one should still realize that a decision can be more readily made when the differences between the courses to be taken are less considerable, and when it will be less inconvenient to retrace one's steps should the choice prove unfortunate. Who, then, does not perceive that an occupation, which one can abandon at will, is less binding than a state which would hold by a perpetual bond; that the sacred ministry, wherein one is concerned with the eternal interests of souls, imposes greater responsibility than a mere secular profession wherein only temporal concerns are at stake, often of minor importance at that; or finally that a supernatural vocation, such as the

priesthood, placing us in absolute dependence upon divine grace, demands of us a more perfect conformity than any other to the will of God, which is our only stay, as our only rule of life.[1]

XVIII.

IS THERE A MEANS OF KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT ONE IS CALLED TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE?

That there should be a means is obvious, for God cannot require the impossible of any person; and furthermore how could one respond to a vocation if he did not know of it? The means should even be sure and easy; so sure and so easy that one could be certain of the result, and that none might make a mistake save those who were wanting in honesty of purpose or who failed to apply it.[2]

2. All writers who have treated of ecclesiastical vocation say that he who desires to know his vocation ought to ask light from Heaven, to examine himself seriously and report his judgment to a

[1] Magna sublimitas magnam debet habere cautelam. Honor grandis grandiori debet sollicitudine circumvallari. (S. Amb., *De Off Min.*)

[2] Sapentia invenitur ab his qui non tentant illam; apparet autem eis qui fidem habent in illam. (*Sap.* I, 2.)

prudent director. They add that anyone who will do well these three things ought to have confidence that God will never reproach him with the course he may then have taken and even that He will not permit him to go astray.[1]

XIX.

WHY HAVE RECOURSE TO A DIRECTOR AND SUBMIT TO HIM THIS QUESTION OF VOCATION?

The Holy Spirit recommends this conduct to us, humility suggests it, and the difficulty of judging well for one's self seems to make it a duty.

1. "My son," says Divine Wisdom, "do nothing without counsel and you will never repent of your course."[2] If this maxim is ever to be applied, should it not be when there is question of so serious a step, fraught with such consequences, even for eternity? "Recall the example of the Apostle," says St. Augustine: "though instructed by a voice from Heaven at the moment of his conversion, he is sent to a man for further enlightenment.

[1] Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis: misericors et miserator et justus. (*Ps.* CXI, 4.)

[2] Fili, sine consilio nihil facias et post factum non poenitebit. (*Eccli.* XXXII, 2e.)

Recall the example of Cornelius the Centurion. An angel informed him that God had accepted his prayers and his alms, yet he must go to Peter to be initiated into the Christian faith."[1]

2. It is the course which humble and modest souls naturally choose. Nothing more surely betrays pride than a disdain of the advice of others and an unmeasured confidence in one's own wisdom. Remember there is but One whose light is unfailing and who is ever self sufficient, God Himself.

3. To pronounce with confidence upon the vocation of an aspirant to the priesthood, it is indispensable that two things be well known: first his dispositions; then the difficulties and duties of the ecclesiastical state. Now, if the aspirant is prudent, he will not hesitate to admit that he has not this knowledge in the degree to be desired. The ecclesiastical state has been reviewed by him as yet only from afar, and he has been able to form only a very imperfect notion of its lofty

[1] Cogitemus ipsum Apostolum Paulum, licet divina et celesti voce prostratum et instructum, ad hominem tamen missum esse. Cogitemus Centurionem Cornelium, quamquam exauditas orationes ejus, eleemosynasque respectas Angelus nuntiaverit, Petro tamen traditum imbuendum. (S. Aug., *De doct. Christ., Prol.* 6.)

character, its duties and its dangers. As for his dispositions, it is true that he can observe them closely enough and that no one can appreciate them more. But it is perhaps just this which exposes him most to self deception: for who has not remarked that one always makes himself out to be more or less as he desires to be? And who does not know how difficult it is to remain impartial on an issue which greatly concerns ourselves. At any rate, never can we be certain of having the same guarantees against partiality on these matters as can a director whom we shall ask to examine these indications and dispositions for us, and who will do so from the sole view-point of God's glory and our greater good.

Such is the method to be followed: to decide nothing of one's self, but to choose as a judge one well enlightened, prudent and pious, and to give him all information required, and all the liberty he can desire in order to pronounce.[1]

[1] Operam date ut aliquem tibi virum invenias qui ornatus virtutibus sit, cujus omnes actiones testentur caritatem in eo erga Deum esse, virum integrum, quietum, minime iracundum, etc. Si talem nancisi contingat, voluntatem tuam exuito, ac dede te illi. (*S. Ber. In Ascet.*)

XX.

WHY LEARNING, WISDOM, AND PIETY, ARE NECESSARY IN A DIRECTOR.

1. Learning, that is, knowledge commensurate with the duties of a priest and with all that concerns the ecclesiastical life, because, in pronouncing on fitness for a state of which one knows but little, only a hazardous judgment can be passed, and that with grave probability of error.[1]

2. Wisdom or Christian prudence; because, without this quality, one would decide inconsiderately, without reflexion and without enlightenment, and abandon himself up to the enthusiasm of the moment, perhaps, or even consult other maxims than those of the gospel and yield to considerations of vanity and egotism.[2]

3. Piety; because this virtue draws down the graces of Heaven, and because a pious priest is more capable of discerning whether or not a subject is fit for the holy ministry. For he who lacks piety,

[1] Sinite illos. Cæci sunt et duces cæcorum. Cæcus autem si cæco ducatum præstet, ambo in foveam cadent. (*Matt.*, XV, 14.)

[2] Consilio a sapiente perquire. (*Tob.* IV, 19.)

who has not a high esteem of the clerical state, a tender affection for his ministry, and great zeal for the ecclesiastical virtues, though he be a man of learning and prudence, will yet be without those great lights which are needed to give wholesome advice in this matter of vocation.[1]

XXI

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY TO KNOW OUR VOCATION?

Because prayer is the means of drawing down upon one's self the blessings of Heaven, and because in order to avoid any mistake in the matter of one's vocation one has need of three signal graces.[2]

1. That one have, in examining this question, only pure and holy views;[3]

[1] Nullus tibi fidelior esse ad consilium potest, quam qui non tua sed te diligit. (S. Greg. M., *Ep.* 35, *lib* I, *Indict.* IX.) Cum viro irreligioso non tracta de sanctitate, et cum injusto de justitia. Quis enim in caeno fontem petit? (S. Amb. *De Offic.*, 11.)

[2] Pete a Deo ut vias tuas dirigat et consilia tua in ipso permaneant. (Tob., IV, 20.)

[3] Domine, quid me vis facere? (*Act.*, IX, 6.) Cum enim pacuit ei qui me segregavit ex utero matris meae et vocavit per gratiam suam, continuo non acquievi carni et sanguini. (*Gal.*, I, 15.)

2. The grace not to mislead our director and not to deceive ourselves as regards our dispositions.[1]

3. The grace to submit with docility to the decision we shall receive, and to follow it faithfully and with entire confidence.[2]

The pious faithful make it a duty to undertake nothing without asking upon it the blessing of Heaven and thereby acknowledge their dependence in this regard; what then would be our negligence and presumption if we should pretend to settle an affair of such importance and perilousness without first having invoked our Lord and asked His assistance in a most especial manner?

XXII.

WHY SHOULD ONE QUESTION HIMSELF AND EXAMINE HIS DISPOSITIONS WITH CARE?

For this reason simply; to be able to give to him whom one consults a knowledge of one's interior,

[1] Saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur. (S. Greg., *De Cura past.* I, c. 9.) Videtur esse caritas et est magis carnalitas. (*Imit.*, I, XV, 2.)

[2] Doce me facere voluntatem tuam. Si mea non docueris faciam voluntatem meam et deseret me Deus meus. (S. Aug., *in Ps.* CXLII, 17.)

clear and complete enough to enable him to judge prudently whether or not one is fitted for the ecclesiastical state.[1]

If you are really desirous that your director shall decide this question, it is not sufficient to tell him merely what you have to confess in the holy tribunal, the faults you have actually on your conscience, nor even those from which you have already been absolved; but you should acquaint him with your state of soul, your character, your inclinations, your habits. He must know to what you are inclined, and of what you are capable; what are your attractions, what your temperament, your dominant dispositions, what you like most in the priesthood and what you fear; since what time in your life have you felt this way, what was the cause of it and what preserved it in you; finally, everything that can give confidence that you will one day be a holy priest, as well as everything that would be of a nature to make fear lest you be unable to bear the burden of he priesthood and to fulfil its obligations.

To be able to furnish all this information will

[1] Quis ex vobis volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus, si habeat ad perficiendum? (*Luc.* XVI, 28.)

require considerable time spent in self examination and serious reflection. But the moments you will give to this employment will be salutary, from any and every point of view; for, while receiving light as to you vocation, you will come to see the virtues wherein you are wanting, and also just what you have to acquire in order to fulfil the duties of your state well.

There is, however, no reason for anxiety. Provided one be sincere and frank, seeking honestly the good pleasure of God, this communication from Heaven will come naturally and without effort.

XXIII.

TO AFFIRM THAT A MAN IS CALLED TO THIS OR THAT STATE, IS IT SUFFICIENT TO KNOW THAT HE IS POSSESSED OF ALL THE DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS FUNCTIONS AND THE DISCHARGES OF ITS DUTIES?

This does not suffice for all conditions of life. Because a man has all that is needed for the perfect exercise of an ordinary profession, one ought not to conclude at once that God has called him to em-

brace it; for it is possible that on further examination he would be found no less capable of another higher and more difficult calling. And, in that case, should he not prefer the latter as the one to which God has destined him?

But if it be a question of the priesthood then there is no room for further seeking. As there is no state more important, more holy, or excellent in any respect, as soon as one recognizes in a subject a true aptitude for the exercise of its functions and the discharge of its duties, one can affirm without hesitation that such is his vocation. It is altogether impossible that God divert from that state anyone of those who are fit for it, or that, after having given them the qualities needed to fill it, He prefer to see them turn elsewhere their activity, their virtue, and their talent.

We shall go even a step further and say that, save for extraordinary cases where God is pleased to manifest His will a in supernatural manner,[1] one needs no other indication than this in order to discern the subjects called to the priesthood. To speak properly, there is but one mark of an ecclesiastical vocation, *Aptitude;* an aptitude which will

[1] I Tim., IV, 14.

warrant one in believing that the ubject will be good priest, that he will have the spirit and the virtues of his calling.[1]

Only we must add one further observation which is of considerable importance: the aptitude necessary for the priesthood is a very complex affair, which supposes in the mind and heart a goodly number of qualities, both natural and supernatural, each of which in turn should be the object of serious examination. These partial signs or indications of vocation are variously described by spiritual writers, but may be reduced to three: solid virtue, a sufficient openness of mind or intelligence, and a pure and enduring attraction for the ecclesiastical life.[2]

[1] Idoneos nos fecit ministros Novi Testamenti, non littera sed spiritu. (II Cor., III, 6.) Christus admittit idoneum et habilem, et ei qui talis non est, aditum intercludit. (S. Cyrill. Alex., *Comment. in Joan.*, X, 7.) Illos quos ad aliquid eligit Deus, ita præparatut ad id ad quod eliguntur, inveniantur digni. (p. 3, S. Thom., III, q. 27, a, 4.) Non solum fecit ministros sed idoneos. Deus enim, cuilibet rei dat per quae possit consequi perfectionem suae naturae. Unde qui constituit ministros Novi Testamenti, dedit et illis idoneitatem ad hoc officium exercendum, nisi sit impedimentum ex parte recipientium. (S. Th., in II *Ep. ad Cor.*, c. 3. *lect.* 2.)

[2] Cfr. Fr. Olier, *lettre* XV.

XXIV.

WHAT DEGREE OF VIRTUE IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ENTER WITHOUT IMPRUDENCE THE CLERICAL STATE?

One should possess a virtue solid enough and perfect enough to warrant the hope that he will suffer no great falls and that he will be able to maintain himself in the perfection which this state will demand of him.[1]

The Church does not require, absolutely, a virtue without stain, such as has never been compromised. For though baptismal innocence is desirable, the Church is not now able to make it a rigorous condition for ascending to the holy altar, as in the first centuries, in those heroic ages when baptism, often put off till late in life, was not conferred until after long trials, when sanctity was common even in the ranks of the simple faithful, and when men, prominent by reason of their position as by their virtue, deemed the dignity of the priesthood far

[1] Hoc est quod dicit Dominus: Sanctificabor in iis qui appropinquant mihi, et in conspectu omnis populi glorificabor in eis. (*Levit.*, X, 3.) Ego autem in innocentia ingressus sum: in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine. (Ps. XV, 13.)

above their merit. Discipline has not been slow to yield in this regard.[1] Yet if an aspirant to the ecclesiastical state had, in his early youth, been guilty of great sins, if he had passed a certain time in these disorderly doings, if he had need of conversion strictly so called, it would not be enough that he merely change his dispositions and receive pardon of his sins in order to enter the clerical state;[2] he must do penance, he must repair his scandals by good example, and in fine he must be firmly enough grounded in virtue as to give confidence that he will not fail to honor his state by persistent application to the work of his own sanctification and that of his brethren.[3]

In this regard one can say that to be admitted into the clergy two things are necessary: first, that one be preserved from the principal vices, such as would be a reproach in the priesthood and

[1] Cf. Bull., *Auctorem fidei, prop.* VIII, n. 3.

[2] In monasteriis omnes recipimus spe meliorandi: at in clero quaerendi sunt quibus nec defectus timeatur, nec profectus optetur, utpote jam perfectis. Viros probatos deligi oportet, non probandos. (S. Bern., *De consid.*, IV.)

[3] Si sanctitas non præcessit, sequatur saltem; novissima tua antiqua sopiant, et delicta juventutis tuae deleat vespertina correctio, ut quae praeire debuerant bona vel subsequantur. (S. Bern., *Epis.* XXVIII, ad. *Ardut. Gebenn.*)

a cause of mistrust in the ministry, as impurity, intemperance, and dissimulation; or, if one has been subject to them, it is required that he be perfectly reformed therein for a sufficiently long time.[1] Secondly, the aspirant should possess in an extraordinary degree the more essential virtues of religion, chastity, modesty, mortification, and obedience, together with a sincere will to make new progress.

The necessity of these conditions can easily be established by authority and by reason. How great a perfection is required cannot be precisely determined any more than an absolute statement can be made regarding it. It consists in an ensemble of moral qualities and supernatural virtues which should readily unify, sustain, and complement each other. To decide what should be a rule in this matter, one must consider many things, and should carefully guard against any illusion. The safest course is, as we have said, to yield to the decision of the director one has chosen and in whose wisdom and virtue one has already placed confidence

[1] Erubesce, Sidon, ait mare: (Is., XXIII, 4.) Erubescant clerici si sanctioris vitae inveniantur laici qui hujus vitae fluctibus sunt immersa. (Pet., *Bless., Synod.* II.)

XXV.

WHY ARE INTELLIGENCE AND REFINEMENT NECESSARY IN AN ASPIRANT TO THE CLERICAL STATE?

The Church desires as her ministers only useful subjects who can work with fruit for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.[1] But those who have not intelligence enough, or who lack taste for clerical studies, or those who have received from nature only a superficial or too narrow mind, instead of accomplishing the Church's purposes could only hinder and thwart them.[2] Yet, every one understands that there are varieties and degrees of perfection, and that the same talent and application is not to be sought everywhere and in all. In practice one should abide by the decisions of superiors; they have authority and grace from God to pronounce. Provided a person has done nothing to deceive himself or them as to his capacity or as to his disposition to study, he can follow their decision in all confidence.

[1] Nullus debet ordinari qui judicio sui episcopi non sit utilis aut necessarius. (*Trid. Sess.* 23.)

[2] Vos estis lux mundi—Si lumen quod in te est tenebrae sunt, ipsae tenebrae quantae erunt. (Matt. V 14; VI 23.)

XXVI.

WHY A TASTE OR ATTRACTION FOR THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE IS INSISTED UPON AS A CONDITION AND EVEN AS A POSITIVE SIGN OF VOCATION.

1. He who has not this taste for the clerical life, who has not of himself an inclination, by way of a sincere esteem and liking, towards the priestly career, will experience therein nothing but trouble and ennui [1] Now one cannot rightly suppose that God calls anyone to a state wherein he shall find only weariness and suffering even until death; the more so since such a one would do only very imperfectly what he would have of a necessity to do, and because he would have need of heroic virtue not to be neglectful in a ministry for which he has but little taste. An attraction for the priesthood is then an essential condition in an aspirant.

2. Besides, when this attraction has certain qualities; when it is pure, strong, and persevering enough, it becomes a positive indication of vocation;

[1] Quomodo si animi vis adsit etiam ea quae sunt gravia fiunt levia, ita si non adsit, etiam ea quae levia sunt gravia fiunt. (S. Chrysos., Hom. XIV in 1 Cor.)

and if this indication be not infallible, it is the nearest to it that can be had, for it is one of the best gauges of the liking one will have for the functions of the priestly state, and of the zeal with which they will be performed.[1]

XXVII.

IS AN ATTRACTION TO THE CLERICAL LIFE NOT A SIGN OF VOCATION UNLESS IT HAVE THE THREE QUALITIES OF STRENGTH, CONSTANCY AND PURITY?

If it had not a certain strength it would be counteracted and perhaps overruled by other attractions; and besides there would be no assurance that the aspirant would always give first consideration to the cares of the ministry. If it were not constant he would have no guarantee of the future. After a short period it might give way o another inclination which would be a hinderance, instead of a help. Lastly if it were not pure, if its purpose were not that which makes for the grandeur and merit of the clerical state, as prayer, the holy office, preaching, works of zeal and charity, but rather what nature finds

[1] Quo enim unumquemque suum ingenium ducit, id majore implet gratia. (S. Amb., *De off.*, I, XLIV, 215.)

agreeable, such as a comfortable position and at the same time honorable and independent, the respect and consideration of the faithful, etc., then instead of being a mark of vocation and a guarantee of one's salvation in the priesthood, it would, quite to the contrary, be an obstacle to self-sanctification, and one would have instead much reason to examine himself and see if in his case the words of a holy doctor might not find application: "Non te vocat Deus, sed diabolus tentat."[1]

XXVIII.

ARE PURITY OF INTENTION AND ATTRACTION TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE EQUALLY NECESSARY IN AN ASPIRANT?

Each of these conditions is as indispensable as the other.[2] Without purity of view—or disinterestedness, the attraction to the priestly state cannot be

[1] Cfr. Traité des saints Ordres. by Fr. Olier; Ch. II. Explanation of the psalm *Quam dilecta.* Saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur et fingit de bono opere amare quod non amat et de mundi gloria non amare quod amat. (S. Greg., *De Cur. Past.*, I, IX.)

[2] Prima tonsura initiandi non sunt, de quibus probabilis conjectura non sit eos ut Deo fidelem cultum praestent hoc vitae genus elegisse. (Conc. Trid., Sess. 23, de ref. c. 4.)

regarded as an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for it is the supernatural quality only which disposes one to fulfil well the duties of the clerical life.

When the attraction is not pure, it rarely extends to all the priestly functions; yet were it universal, were it not less agreeable to catechise children, to attend the sick, to care for the poor, than to preach the great truths of religion or to preside over the ceremonies; if one were accustomed to look upon the functions only from the view point of interest or of vanity and not in the light of faith, when the moment for exercising them shall have arrived, the egotistic motives of vanity and interest will alone present themselves and then, instead of doing holily these holy actions, and of drawing down upon himself the graces of Heaven, he will, rather, execute them with numberless imperfections, infidelities, and short-comings at least half voluntary, and even with faults positive and fully consented to.[1]

It is of consequence then that an aspirant examine himself well in this regard And if he desires to enlighten himself as to his dispositions, he 's not

[1] Si oculus tuus fuerit nequam, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit. (Matt., VI, 23.) Oculum hic debemus accipere pro intentione. (S. Aug., *in h. l.*)

to be content with invoking the Holy Spirit and interrogating himself;[1] he should also ask his director to aid him with his advice and to speak out his mind freely. How many self-deluded young men flatter themselves that they act with a pure motive of love for God, when it is evident to all who know them that they heed only the inspirations of nature and that they are but following the motions of cupidity and self love.[2]

XXIX.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE IF ONE DISCOVERS IN HIMSELF A MIXTURE OF HUMAN VIEWS AND HOLY INTENTIONS? WOULD THIS BE A PROOF THAT ONE HAS NOT A TRUE VOCATION?

No, for the most perfect cannot but feel the suggestions of nature, and hence it is not surprising

[1] Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum et in tabernacula tua. (Ps. XLII, 13.)

[2] Quam multi non quaerunt Jesum nisi ut illis faciat bene! Vix quaeritur Jesus propter Jesum. S. Aug., In verba: "Quæritis me quia saturatis estis." (*Tract. in Joan.*, XXV,10.) Per eorum personam Dominus illos intra sanctam Ecclesiam detestatur qui, per sacros Ordines ad Dominum propinquantes, non eisdem Ordinibus virtutum merita, sed subsidia vitae praesentis exquirunt. (S. Greg., *Moral.*, XXIII, XVII.)

that these should make themselves felt by an aspirant to the ecclesiastical life and that they should contend in the heart against the inspirations of grace. Moreover even when one has failed in faithful defence against them, or has adhered to them for some time, there is no reason for losing confidence or for believing that one has not a real vocation.[1] This should only recall to one's mind the example of the sons of Zebedee and of Our Lord's dealing with them. According to the Gospel narrative, the desire of a high position and of great power seized them and their mother as well.[2] Our Lord did not reject them, for all that; far from it. Upon being assured that, despite this vanity, they esteemed, above all, His service and His society, and that they were disposed to follow unhesitatingly in His footsteps, He encouraged them in their design; then, taking advantage of their ardor He prevailed upon them to renounce all and to take up the cross, and made them to accept all the sacrifices of the apostolic life. His

[1] Conveniat unusquisque cor suum, et in omni vita inveniet quam rarum sit fidelem animum invenire, ut nihil ob gloriae cupiditatem, nihil ob rumusculos hominum faciat. Vicina sunt vitia virtutibus. (S. Hieron., *Adv. Lucif.*, 15.)

[2] Cfr. Matt., XX, 20; Marc., X, 35.

is the example all should take to heart whose views are disinterested enough. Thus they may purify their sentiments, rectify their intentions, and redouble their generosity and love for God. In the measure that their views will be more proper, their attraction will be truer, and their vocation more probable.

XXX.

WHAT IS MEANT PRECISELY WHEN ONE IS ASKED TO DELIBERATE UPON HIS VOCATION WITH AN ENTIRE INDIFFERENCE?

Simply that, in the very depth of one's soul, and in the sincerest disposition of one's will, one be detached from all interest and prefer to anything the good pleasure of God. When, therefore, spiritual writers recommend an attitude of indifference in the choice of one's vocation, they mean an indifference on the part of the reason and the will, not a real absence of all inclination or predominant attraction. One sees nothing to reprehend in the dispositions of an ordinand who says to his director before every examen; "I feel myself drawn to the priesthood; this attraction is

of long standing and powerful, and is the result of such and such motives;" provided he add, "But I am well decided to count it as a mere sentiment until I can discover some indication of a divine vocation. Whatever be my tastes and inclinations, I am resolved to trample them under foot and do myself any violence rather than wound my conscience or oppose the will of God."

XXXI.

DOES THE INTENTION OF SAVING ONE'S SOUL OR OF MAKING SURE OF SALVATION BY CONSECRATION TO GOD, SUFFICE AS A MOTIVE FOR ENTERING THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE?

The intent of assuring one's salvation is without doubt essential; it should be the primary determination of a Christian or of any reasonable being; but, of itself it does not warrant or justify one in choosing the clerical state.

1. There is in the Church a state which has for its especial object to assure the salvation of those who embrace it, and to furnish to souls, desirous of their sanctification, the means of more effectually

correcting their failings and of advancing in virtue; but this is not the clerical, but rather, the religious state.[1] The religious, then, and not the clerical, state is the vocation of those who have no other desire than that of assuring their salvation and of sanctifying themselves.

2. The essential and especial object of the clerical state, and of the priesthood, is to procure the glory of God by working in the service of the Church and for the sanctification of souls. Such should be the intention of those who enter it, if they wish to fulfill its duties and exercise well its functions.[2] Without doubt it is necessary, before all else, that clerics save themselves, and hence they ought, as others, to desire their own salvation first; but one can save himself everywhere, and there have been saints in all states of life.[3] The consideration of God's honor and the salvation of souls, or rather the conviction that God wishes our assistance in procuring the one and the other,

[1] Nos in monasteriis omnes recipimus spe meliorandi; in clero autem viros probatos deligi oportet, non probandos. (S. Bern., *De Consid.*, IV, II.)

[2] Si officium vis exercere presbyteri, aliorum salutem fac lucrum animae tuae. (S. Jerome, *Epis.* LVIII, 5.)

[3] Unusquisque sicut vocavit Deus, ita ambulet. (I Cor, VII.)

is in reality the only motive which ought to determine one in preferring the ecclesiastical life to any other.

3. It is an illusion to imagine, as do some short sighted persons, that one will have nothing more to fear for salvation as soon as one will have entered upon this or that state. Even in the most favorable conditions, in the religious state itself, one can always lose his soul; and one would be greatly exposed to this awful misfortune if he had not entered by the right way, under the inspiration of God, and with the proper intentions. Yet the greatest mistake of all is to believe that the clerical state puts an end to all danger. For those who are called to it, and who have the heart to respond to their calling, this state is the source of most abundant graces, but for those who are not destined to it, or who have lost the spirit, it would be the most dangerous of positions.[1]

The more so that one is utterly dependent upon Heaven, and in endless need of Its help. Lest one be lost, one must live in humility, diffidence of self,

[1] Quod dico vobis, omnibus dico, vigilate. (Marc., XIII, 37.) Ego igitur castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, ne forte cum aliis prædicaverim ipse reprobus efficiar. (I Cor., IX, 26.)

ceaseless prayer, and, according to the maxim of the apostle, work out one's salvation in fear and trembling.

XXXII.

THE BISHOPS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ARE THE ONES TO CALL TO ORDERS THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY, AND ONE SHOULD ALWAYS DEFER TO THEIR JUDGMENT.

Deference is due to their judgment in all that concerns them, in all that is within their province, and in all which they have the means and the purpose to decide, that is to say, in the matter of external conditions, capacity, intelligence, knowledge, etc., and, unless one has used dissimulation, or knows that they are in error on some point, one can with all confidence submit to their decision; and in fact this deference is certainly due their authority. But as regards moral qualities, virtue, intention, attraction, etc., since these are, of their very nature, hidden and unknowable to superiors, except by special means, the bishops and their representatives do not and cannot pretend to decide, at least with any manner of certainty. Hence a call from them does

not relieve him who receives it of the obligation of examining his conscience and of taking particular counsel.[1] If he believes, after such examination, that he should forego ordination, and if such be the advice of a safe and enlightened director, then even though called externally he need not fear that he will be wanting in obedience to authority; on the contrary, he can rest assured of having conformed to their most positive wishes. The history of the Church shows us indeed, that at times a sort of violence has been used to bring to the ordinations those who had declared themselves unworthy;[2] but these are exceptional cases. It is certain that they speak through humility and besides the ecclesiastical laws have for a long time prescribed that the ordinands be allowed full liberty in this matter.

[1] Alius est a quo ungitur, alii qui ipsam unctionem a Domino esse testantur. Electum te a Deo in ministerium, non ab hominibus, credo, si illi hoc te indicant, qui dum Dei Spiritu pleni sunt, quae dicunt non humana sed divina sentiuntur. (S. Greg. *In.*, I *Reg.*, IV, 5.)

[2] Necesse habui dicere Domino: Non mea voluntas sed tua fiat. (S. Paulini., Ep. II, *ad Armand.*, 2.) Nec in convivio Domini mei superiorem locum elegi, sed infeiorem et abjectum, et placuit illi dicere mihi: Ascende superius. (S. Aug., *Serm.* CCLV, 2.)

XXXIII.

OUGHT ONE TO HOLD TO THE FIRST DECISION HE HAS RECEIVED OR OUGHT OTHER DIRECTORS BE CONSULTED?

There are certainly many good motives which one could have in seeking the advice of more than one director. For example: if the director hesitated as to which course should be chosen; if one has reason to think he has judged poorly from the facts given or that he has but partly appreciated certain considerations; or, indeed, if there is question of an heroic determination for which it is essential that one have an absolute conviction. But such cases are of course rare The ordinary rule to be followed is, to submit to the first decision and to hold to it in peace. To have resource to a new judge because the first verdict is not to one's liking, is simply a sign that one is seeking to do his own will instead of God's, while to desire a new examination in order to confirm the first, is but a loss of time at the risk of remaining in the end undecided between conflicting opinions.[1]

[1] To seek the advice of too many persons is to be like pleaders who always look for a chance to quibble. (S. Vinc. De Paul.)

So, when one has chosen a good director and has furnished him with all useful information, and allowed him full liberty to pronounce according to his conscience, one need have no misgivings. In acting upon his judgment one incurs no responsibility. As he decides one way or the other, one can not do better than to abide by his decision without commencing a new inquiry before a different tribunal. If advised to present yourself for ordination, then prepare with all possible humility and fervor. If counselled against the reception of Holy Orders, do not insist; and do not seek to make the director to return upon his decision, or to inspire him with doubts, or to put him in opposition with others. A far greater assurance is needed to advance than to retract or delay; and, generally speaking, never does a director reflect more seriously and never has he a purer intention than in giving a decision which he knows to be displeasing and which will be regarded as unfavorable.[1]

[1] Dixit David: Si Dominus dixerit mihi: Non places: praesto sum; faciat quod bonum est coram se. (II *Reg.*, XV, 26.)

XXXIV.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE IF A DIRECTOR IS NOT WILLING TO DECIDE OR IF HIS DECISION IS OPPOSED TO ONE ALREADY RECEIVED?

1. If the director hesitates and cannot bring himself to decide either way, why not delay the decision? In the meantime the director will pray, he will observe, and reflect, whereas he who consults will on his part strive to profit by such graces as God will give him, and he will come to see all that he can expect. Thus the question will be cleared up little by little and will seem to resolve itself.

2. If the advice of the director be opposed to an earlier decision, this circumstance, especially if it were known to the director, should not invalidate or weaken his actual verdict. It can readily be understood that the same person can, at different periods, be the object of very different decisions as regards his vocation. A certain man at twenty might have all the desirable qualities of a good priest, yet when arrived at thirty he might so have changed that for him to exercise worthily the holy ministry would be an

impossibility.[1] On the contrary, one might for a long time have had an inclination to civil or military life, but, when of mature age, his character or liking changed, his mind became enlightened and his sentiments more lofty; grace possessed his soul and transformed him into a new man; such was St. Augustine. Because a director had given a young man a decision as to his vocation at the age of twenty, is no reason why he should not now give a verdict to the contrary. Of this there can be no doubt, and to be practical, there is but one rule for each to follow at any and all times; it is the will of God. Now that will, which is one with the Divine Wisdom, takes account, at each instant, of all circumstances and is ever in perfect harmony with them.

[1] Pro eo quod abjecisti sermonem Domini, abjecit te Dominus. (I Reg., XV, 23.) Ne quis fornicator aut profanus, ut Esau, qui propter unam escam vendidit primitiva sua. Scitote enim quoniam, et postea cupiens hereditare benedictionem, reprobatus est: non enim invenit poenitentiae locum quamquam cum lacrymis inquisisset illam. (Hebr., XII, 17.)

CHAPTER III.

OTHER CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR TONSURE.

XXXV.

WHEN VOCATION IS ASSURED, WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE PRESENTING ONE'S SELF FOR TONSURE.

Though one may be sufficiently satisfied that he has a vocation, he must yet consider whether he can fulfill all the requirements for ordination. To judge of this, he must examine first whether he might not actually be excluded because of some defect or irregularity; secondly, whether he is possessed of the dispositions necessary for a worthy reception of Tonsure, as well as for profiting by the graces attached thereto.

One can readily understand how regrettable it would be to make a poor and ill prepared start in a calling wherein a lifetime must be spent. Therefore, one can as readily appreciate the necessity of neglecting no precaution that will insure a

reception, in all its plenitude, of the graces destined by God for those who consecrate themselves to His service.[1]

XXXVI.

THE CHIEF IRREGULARITIES AND CANONICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO THE RECEPTION OF HOLY ORDERS.[2]

Ecclesiastical law forbids ordination to, as well as the exercise of Holy Orders:

1. Because of unworthiness and as a punishment therefor, first, to all who have publicly professed heresy; secondly, to all who have received or conferred the Sacrament of Baptism on the same person more than once; thirdly, to anyone who has sought promotion to Orders by underhand means; fourthly, to anyone who has assumed the functions of a sacred Order without first having received it, or who is under any censure; fifthly, to anyone guilty of homicide or mutilation.

[1] Quoniam prima tonsura ad ordines suscipiendos quaedam praeparatio iis est qui Dei ministerio dicandi sunt, permultum propterea refert in illa conferenda et suscipienda diligentiam studiose adhibere. (Conc. Med. IV, De Sac. Ord.)

[2] Read the beginning of the Pontifical "Reverendissimus in Christo Pater, sub excommunicationis poena" etc.

2. Through motives of propriety and for the honor of the priesthood, first, to anyone who, even though through no fault of his own has caused the death or mutilation of any person; secondly, to anyone who himself may be mutilated, or be so deformed as not to be able to perform becomingly the principal functions of the different Orders; thirdly, to anyone not born in legitimate wedlock; fourthly, to those who have not the required knowledge or the ordinary aptitude for clerical studies, who have lost the use of reason, or who are subject to epileptic attacks; sixthly, to those who have ever suffered condemnation, or have exercised a profession, which according to canon law is regarded as disreputable.

Of course all these impediments being canonical, that is, of ecclesiastical origin, can be removed by proper dispensation; but, when an irregularity is due to a defect of body or mind, or indeed to the crime of homicide or of mutilation, the power of dispensation is reserved to the Sovereign Pontiff himself.

All this goes to show with what care the Church ever guards the honor of the priesthood and the dignity of her ministers. Should one care to go

deeper into this subject he must have recourse to the works of the canonists; if one have any misgiving or anxiety on a particular point let him submit the matter to the judgment of some well informed and discreet ecclesiastic.

XXXVII.

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED BY THE CANONS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LAW OF GOD FOR ORDINATION TO TONSURE?

The Council of Trent demands that the candidate have been confirmed, that he be well grounded in the elements of faith and possess sufficient knowledge to enter successfully upon his clerical studies. The law of God requires that he be in the state of grace and have a pure and supernatural intention.[1]

The necessity of these conditions is easily recognized:

1. To be worthy of a place in the highest rank of the Church, and to be offered as a model and guide

[1] Prima tonsura non initientur, qui sacramentum confirmationis non susciperint et fidei rudimenta edocti non fuerint, quique legere et scribere nesciant, etc. (Conc. Trent., *Sess.* 23, *De ref.* c. 4.)

to the faithful, it certainly does not suffice to be a mere Christian, such as one becomes through Baptism. Rather one should be an exemplary Christian; one who has put to profit the grace of Confirmation.

2. It is altogether intolerable that a cleric should be ignorant of the fundamental Christian truths such as are commonly taught to the people and are known by all the pious faithful.

3. A certain amount of learning is necessary even in the youngest, in order that they may be able to take up, if they have the intelligence, the studies in which the holy ministry requires that every cleric be well versed.

4. As to the state of grace, and the purity of intention, these are clearly essential dispositions without which the consecration of the tonsured would not be acceptable to God, but be hypocritical and a sham.[1]

[1] Vae filiis irae, qui se ministros gratiae profitentur. (St. Bernard, *De Conv. Cleric.* XIX.)

XXXVIII.

WHY IS IT OF SUCH IMPORTANCE THAT A CANDIDATE PRESENT HIMSELF FOR TONSURE WITH PURE AND HOLY INTENTIONS?

For the best of reasons, a few of which we now give:

1. If the intention be not good and supernatural, the step taken in Tonsure would be without merit, for God can recompense or reward only those acts which He inspires and which are in accord with the teachings of His Son. Who, then, would not regret having rendered at least useless, an act which could have had so dear a value in the sight of Heaven?[1]

2. If the step be not taken through motives of faith, then it must be prompted by disorderly, selfish and unworthy designs, vanity perhaps, ambition, or personal interest. Now, to enter the clerical state with such purposes means not merely the forfeiting of all merit, but positively to offend God and to deserve His chastisements, to make His worship subserve cupidity and to appoint to

[1] Videte vosmetipsos ne perdatis quae operati estis, sed ut mercedem plenam recipiatis. (II, John, 8.)

an altogether profane end, a thing which is in itself of most religious character, thus demeaning an act of devotion to profanation and sacrilege.

3. We may fitly apply here the maxim of Our Lord; "*Lucerna corporis tui est oculus tuus.*"[1] The eye is a lamp to the body, and all the members enjoy the light it suffuses, or grope in the darkness it fails to dispel. It is just so with the intention in regard to a work. Should one enter the clerical state with unworthy, grovelling views, he would certainly be inclined to perform its functions in the same spirit; and, if he receive his first ordination in a poor spirit, it is greatly to be feared that those ordinations to follow will not find him in any way improved.[2]

Because he knew this to be only too true, Fr. Bourdoise, a man who appreciated the significance of the clerical consecration as few have done and who was known for his zeal to instil a due esteem for it, did not hesitate to affirm that those who pronounce the *Dominus pars* only from the lips, without meaning it in their heart, never are of that

[1] Matt., VI, 22; Luke, XI, 34.

[2] Primum in unoquoque genere est mensura caeterorum. (St. Thos.)

blessed generation which seeks the Lord and to whom only the Church willingly opens her sanctuary.[1] "They belong rather to that perverse and accursed generation, which seeks the demon and is already on the road to hell."

XXXIX.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE, LASTLY, BY WAY OF PREPARATION FOR TONSURE, AND TO MAKE SURE OF THE PROPER DISPOSITIONS?

Simply, and necessarily, this; to follow seriously and generously and with a good will, the retreat conducted in the seminary for the benefit of the ordinands.[2]

This is done in part by meditating, by pondering in one's heart the truths set forth by the preacher; by considering attentively the nature and characteristics of each stage in the clerical life and the holy ministry as explained in the pontifical; by seeking inspiration in the great maxims of priestly perfection and in the

[1] Pontifical, De Clerico faciendo.

[2] Et omnis qui habet hanc spem, sanctifcat se, sicut et ille sanctus est. (I John, III, 3.)

lives of worthy priests. For the rest, the ordinand should enter into himself that he may see wherein his preparation for his vocation is lacking, or whether he has been determined in his course through love of God, or of himself, or of anyone else; and to examine also whether or not he is possessed of the courage to live up to it; whether or not he fears that the state may be too high and holy for him; whether or not he sincerely desires and hopes to become one day a good priest; lastly, whether or not he is ready to make any sacrifice rather than fail culpably in his obligations and forfeit the friendship of God. All these things are matter for consultation with your director. Confer with him and then purify your conscience by a good and fervent confession.

An ordinand, truly called by God and faithful to grace, cannot make his retreat in this manner without feeling in his heart strong stirrings of faith, of humility, of gratitude, and of loving whole-souled devotion to God. His good dispositions will be assured; he will take the contemplated step and pronounce his words of consecration with an honest heart, without misgiving or reserve.

CHAPTER IV.

CEREMONIES AND PRESCRIBED PRAYERS FOR THE CONFERRING OF TONSURE.

XL.

ARE THE PRAYERS AND CEREMONIES OF ORDINATION DESERVING OF ATTENTIVE STUDY?

After the revealed word itself, nothing is more worthy of the consideration and meditation of the ordinand.

1. Therein is found the most impressive and adequate exposition of all that the would-be cleric most needs to know:[1] the respect due to the clerical state, the conditions for ordination, the

[1] Quod legentibus Scripturae, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus. In ipso legant, qui litteras nesciunt. (St. Greg. Epist. XIII, lib. XI.) Omnia haec quae extrinsecus geruntur, signa sunt rerum internarum. (Amal., De offic. Eccl., I, 2.) In ecclesiasticis officiis, nihil otiose fit, sed totum vel ad aedificationem fidei, vel ad compositionem morum ab iis qui non serviunt litterae occidenti sed spiritui vivificanti, reflectitur. (Pet. Dam., *Tract. in Dom. vobisc.*, I.)

powers conferred, the obligations assumed, and the virtues required.

"A cleric, an acolyte, or a sub-deacon can have no better means of knowing what he has become, what rule of life he is to follow, or what service to God he is to render in the Church, than to read and meditate attentively upon the prayers read from the Pontifical at his ordination. There is neither teacher nor book able to speak to him in more fitting language, or to furnish him with better thoughts, or to give him a better understanding of those things which concern his state."[1]

2. These instructions of the Pontifical are the work of no mere man, nor of any Father, or Doctor ever so saintly and enlightened, but their author and guarantee is the Church of Christ spread throughout the world and ever assisted by the Spirit of her Divine Head. Through age after age she has addressed these self same words to her ministers on the day of their consecration, and never has she permitted an ordaining prelate to change any word whatsoever. We have reason, then, for implicit confidence in, and reverence for, the Pontifical prayers and instructions, and it would be most unreasoning

[1] Bourdoise, *Sentences.*

and unwarrantable for anyone to suspect them of exaggeration or of error.

And this is to be understood of the entire Pontifical. It was the custom of St. Charles to have all his ordinands study that part which immediately concerned them, and then to question them closely on the matter in order to make sure that they should be well instructed.[1]

XLI.

WHY DOES THE ARCHDEACON, IN THE NAME OF THE BISHOP, ANNOUNCE AT THE BEGINNING THE BISHOP'S TITLES WITH AN INVOCATION OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE: "DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA, EPISCOPUS"?

In order to render homage to the sovereignty of the Roman Pontiff. The bishop testifies by this that he shares in the government of the Church only by the will of, and under dependence to the visible

[1] Examinandus est ordinandus an vim et naturam, mysteriaque Ordinis quem suscepturus est norit, an item ritus ac caeremonias quae ex libro Pontificali adhibentur cum initiatur, an eorum item signficationes sanctiores, an sacrarum vestium quibus induitur, mysteria item significata? Quaeratur quid per tonsuram significetur, quid per superpelliceum declaretur, etc. (Conc. Mediol., V.)

head of the Church. He makes due acknowledgment that, were it not for his appointment by papal authority, he would have no right to confer Orders or to give ministers to the Church.

In fact, it is a fundamental principle, on which rests the unity of the Church's hierarchy and government, that the plenitude of spiritual power has been given to Peter and resides in his successors: "*Numquam Christus nisi per Petrum dedid quidquid aliis non negarit.*" [1] As regards this power of ordination, history shows that in all times the Supreme Pontiffs have exercised absolute power. They have determined all conditions thereof, the time, the place, and the day; they, too, have declared what are the qualities required in candidates for ordination, who are to be refused ordination, what advice is to be given to the ordinands, what rites are to be observed, the causes and ceremonial of deposition. "On the day of ordination," says Rupert, "the Stational Mass is at St. Peter's;" thus signifying that he is the source of all spiritual power and that Orders are conferred only by the authority of Peter.[2]

[1] St. Leo. *Sermon*, IV, 2.
[2] Rupert., *De divin. Offic.*, III, 10.

Thus, there is never an ordination in any place wheresoever independently of the authority and without the exercise, in some sort, of the power of the Sovereign Pontiff. Consequently, there is not an ecclesiastic who is not in part indebted to the Holy See for his elevation to Orders, or who must not extend even to the Supreme Authority the gratitude and submission which his ministry imposes on him.[1]

XLII.

WHY ARE THE ORDINANDS CALLED, IN THE NAME OF THE BISHOP, EACH BY HIS OWN NAME, AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE CEREMONY?

In order the more forcibly to recall and inculcate the teaching of the Apostle, that no one ought of his own initiative enter the sanctuary, or seek the honor of the priesthood uncalled by God. "*Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo.*"[2]

[1] Ex institutione Christi nullus debet in Ecclesia dare vel suscipere Ordines, si non interveniat vera et interpretative auctoritas supremae monarchiae, sive Papae. (Gerson, t. II, p. 239.)

[2] Hebr. V, 4.

It is done also in imitation of the example of Our Lord. When the Divine Master willed to confer on a certain number of His disciples the title and dignity of Apostles, He first retired into a mountain and there passed a night in prayer; then, returning, called by name those whom He had chosen: "*Vocavit ipsos quos voluit.*" In like manner ought every minister of the Church be chosen until the very end of time. Any ordination, even the least and lowest, is always an unmerited favor. To present one's self without temerity, it is necessary first, to be called by the Supreme Pontiff and to defer to His orders: "*Vocat nominatim.*"

As a further expression of this doctrine, as well of these sentiments, the aspirants to Tonsure carry an unfolded surplice on their left arm They hold it thus, because they are about to offer it to the bishop that he may vest them with it.[2] They do not vest themselves, because the surplice is the insignia and symbol of a dignity which no one may arrogate to himself, and which can be received

[1] John, X, 3; Acts IX, 15; XIII, 2.

[2] Quilibet ordinandorum habere debet superpelliceum super brachium suum, et candelam in manu dextera. (Pontif. *Pro cler. fac.*)

only from Heaven. It is the same with the other ordinandi. All present their vestments to the bishop to be vested with them by him.

XLIII.

WHY DOES THE BISHOP CUT THE HAIR OF THE CANDIDATE FOR TONSURE?

To signify two things:

1. The spirit of detachment or renunciation in which a cleric should live. In submitting his hair to the bishop's scissors, the would-be cleric gives plain token of his desire to forego wordly concerns and interests, to sacrifice anything that will hinder his belonging exclusively to the service of God and of His only Son. Nothing could more strikingly symbolize this truth than the cutting of the hair by a bishop, for, to become a worthy cleric and minister of God, one must begin with detachment from things nearest one's self. It does not suffice merely to give up goods or fortune and the like; for this amounts to little, unless one renounce equally such goods as are personal, intimately so, to which one may be unusually attached.

This sacrifice almost invariably takes the form of mortification of one's affections, one's will, one's desires, in a word of everything that is of self or for self.[1] "In order that a tree or vine may bear other or better fruit," says Fr. Bourdoise, "it is necessary, by grafting, to cut off the topmost part and some branches; so too, in order to make a true ecclesiastic, who will lead a worthy life, a similar treatment is called for. The old man and all his passions must die the death; vanity, pride and cupidity with all their kindred growths must be lopped off and destroyed. Otherwise, ordination can effect no union with Jesus Christ, nor will the ordained live by His spirit, and, by consequence, the

[1] Qui amat saeculum, amare Deum non potest; occupatam habet manum. Dicit illi Deus: Tene quod do. Non vult dimittere quod tenebat. Non potest accipere quod offertur. (St. Aug., *Sermon* CLXXXV, p. 185.) Est in clericis tonsura signum quoddam quod in corpore figuratur, sed in anima agitur, scilicet ut hoc signo in religione vitia resecentur et criminibus carnis nostrae quasi crinibus exuamur, atque inde innovatis sensibus ut comis rudibus enitescamus, expoliantes nos, juxta Apostolum, veterem hominem cum actibus suis et induentes novum. (St. Isidor Hisp. *De off. Eccl.*, I, II, c. 4.) Rasio capitis est temporalium omnium depositio. (*Caus.* 12, q. 1. c. 'Duo sunt.') Sicut enim fili non sunt pars corporis, sed quaedam superfluitas procedens a corporis humore, sic bona temporalia non sunt nobis naturalia sed superflua. (St. Aug., *De Cont. Mund.*, 3. Apoc.)

Church will have neither a new apostle nor his fruitful work." [1]

2. The consecration a cleric wishes to make of his person to Our Savior. When he offers his head to the bishop, he is as a victim giving himself up to the sacrificial minister. The bishop accepts this victim in the name of the Savior, and he accepts it wholly, as it is given. Here, however, it is not the immediate shedding of blood that God asks of this minister: it is simply a surrender of his will, the consecration of his faculties, energies, and life to the worship and service of the Church and of Himself. Wherefore the bishop performs a mystical immolation. It is enough to apply the steel of sacrifice as closely to the person as can well be done without wound and blood. He returns to the tonsured his offering, reminding him of his obligation ever to regard himself as an accepted offering, belonging to the Savior, and therefore, of employing all he has and is for the glory of His Sovereign Master

[1] Bourdoise, *Sentences.*

XLIV.

WHY THE TONSURED PRONOUNCES THE WORDS "DOMINUS PARS" ETC., WHILE THE BISHOP CUTS HIS HAIR.

This he must do as a sign that he understands what the bishop and himself are about, that he enters seriously into the bishop's intentions, and that he has at heart the dispositions of which Tonsure is but the symbol. It would be difficult, indeed, to express more fittingly the intentions of renunciation and consecration to Our Lord, than in these very words; for the *Dominus Pars* is a concise and unequivocal declaration that one gives up wordly concerns and interests,—whether they be of business or of pleasure, in order the more perfectly to serve God on earth and possess Him in Heaven.[1] Were these words always uttered, as they should be, seriously, sincerely and generously, what a worthy priesthood we would have! How happy

[1] Si ego pars Domini sum, et funiculus haereditatis ejus, habens victum et vestitum his contentus ero, et nudam crucem nudus sequar. (St. Jerome., *Epist.* II, *ad. Nep.*, 5. Cfr. Olier "*Traité des Saints Ordres,*" De la Cléricature; ch. III, sur le Ps. XXIII).

the condition of the Church, if those who make such proffers of service lived up to their words! And yet, how many there are who seem to utter them only with the lips, without reflection, without conviction, without a firm resolve of remaining faithful to them! And yet again, how many whose dispositions are poor, whose good desires and intentions are ill defined, weak, and inefficacious![1]

XLV.

WHY DOES THE BISHOP CUT THE HAIR IN FIVE DIFFERENT PLACES AND IN THE FORM OF A CROSS?

The purpose of this is to give the tonsured to understand that, once he has engaged in the service of Jesus Christ, he must take up his cross resolved to carry it unflinchingly to the end.

"If anyone will come after me," said Our Lord, "let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow

[1] Quomodo non erubescit dicere: Dominus pars haereditatis meae? Ubi est illud apostolicum: Quae conventio Christi ad Belial? Qui terrenas possessiones relinquere nolunt, cur peccata populi comedunt? (St. Aug. *De Cont. Mundi*, I. Apoc.)

me."[1] The bishop, representing Christ, addresses the young cleric in like manner: "You cannot take Jesus Christ as your portion, nor His chalice, unless you accept His cross at the same time. Be not ashamed of it: rather, you can well be proud of the sacred cross. Carry it, then, like an apostle, courageously, generously, and you will one day find it an unfailing source of merit and consolation."[2] The Church, also, has a suggestion to make to this effect, that our sacrifices are valueless if they be not united with that of the Cross; that there is but one victim worthy of the Divine Majesty, the victim immolated on Calvary; and, moreover, that if God deigns to accept the offerings we make of our persons, He does so only because of His Divine Son whose living members we are in His sight, and because in our oblations He beholds the realization of His wishes, the fruit of His grace, the effect of His inspirations.

According to the rubrics, the bishop traces a cross on the head of the tonsured by cutting the hair in five

[1] Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam et sequatur me. (Matt., XVI, 24.) Qui non accipit crucem suam, non est me dignus. (Matt., X, 38.)

[2] Agnosce haereditatem tuam in Christi cruce, in laboribus plurimis. (St. Bernard, *De Cons.*, II, VI, 12.)—Mihi absit gloriari nisi in Cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est et ego mundo. (Gal., VI, 24.)

different places. This is done in order to bring home more forcibly to the young cleric that now he is to be most truly a bearer of the cross of Jesus Christ, and that, to merit the inheritance proffered him, he must live a more mortified life, restrain his senses, crucify his sinful concupiscences, and deny himself in those things most pleasing to nature, particularly should they be disorderly or at all unbecoming; perhaps if even only superfluous.[1]

XLVI.

WHY IS THE TONSURE, WORN BY CLERICS IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES, OF CIRCULAR FORM, LIKE TO A CROWN?

It is worn thus, as a mark of the priestly character and dignity of all who bear it.

To serve God is to reign; to be a minister of Jesus Christ, in any capacity whatsoever, is to be superior to any temporal dignitary, be he king or emperor.[2] Wherefore, the Church adjudges it

[1] Qui Christi sunt carnem suum crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis suis. (Gal., V, 24.)

[2] In ordine clericatus nos promovens caracteristica quadam tonsurae corona a communi grege fidelium segre-

proper to give to her priests and to all those who have any part in the sacred functions, an insignia analogous to that which distinguishes royalty and other dignities of this world.[1]

But if the clerical crown is to be a reminder to the ecclesiastic of his superior capacity as leader and guide of his fellow Christians, it is no less a constant reminder that his power is not that of a prince of this world, and therefore, is not to be used as such. It follows, too, that it is not calculated to flatter pride or to feed vanity. It is neither of gold nor precious material; on the contrary, it can only be made by cutting away what seems to have been

gavit. (Hildeb., p. 673.)—Cui servire regnare est. (*Pontif., Ordin. Subd.*)

[1] Quod enim Petrus apostolus fideli populo tribuit; "Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium," peculiari quadam et magis propria ratione ad ecclesiasticos ministros pertinere facile intelligimus. (*Cat. Trid.*, II, *De Ord.* 30.) Quod detonso capite relinquitur sacerdotium regnumque Ecclesiae existimo figurari, ut impleatur corporis etiam quadam similitudine quod scriptum est a beato Petro: "Nos genus electum," etc. Ferunt Apostolorum principem eam consuetudinem induxisse ad memoriam coronæ quae ex spinis contexto Salvatoris nostri capiti fuit imposita, ut quod impii ad Christi ignominiam et cruciatum excogitaverint, eo Apostoli ad gloriam et decus uterentur, simulque significarent curandum esse a ministris Ecclesiae ut omnibus in rebus Christi Domini nostri speciem et figuram gerant. (*Catec. Trid.* P. II. *De Ord.* 30.)

given to man for an ornament, and, while it insures to us the respect and reverence of the good and faithful, it is amusing, nonsensical, perhaps even offensive to others.

XLVII.

WHY THE CHURCH PRESCRIBES A SPECIAL MANNER OF DRESS FOR CLERICS.

A change of distinctive dress implies a change of condition. When one quits the world and enters the sanctuary, when one ceases to be a secular or lay person in order to become a man of God, it is only proper that he should lay aside his profane costume, which bespeaks a secular occupation and life, and don another attire, a new dress, in keeping with the nobler and more perfect life to which he now aspires. And could anything be better suited[1] to the clerical character, or more expressive of the mind of a true ecclesiastic, than the clothes of black and of clerical cut, or the soutane, for ordinary

[1] Prioris vestis detractio et alterius inductio significat a media sancta ad perfectionem traductionem. (St. Dyon., *De Eccles. hier.*, VI.)—Sic immutantur in vultibus, ita dextera manus ejus virtutis tribuat eis in crementa. (*Pontif., De cler. fac.*)

wear, and the surplice worn while assisting in choir or in the exercise of other sacred functions?

For, after all, what is a tonsured person, or, as a matter of fact, what does his vocation require him to be? Briefly, a model Christian, a man regenerated through the grace of God, who has renounced sin, given up the world, and mortified nature that he might give himself to Jesus Christ, to serve Him and His Church, as best he can, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In Him the old man, corrupt nature bequeathed by Adam with its depraved instincts and desires, has been effectually suppressed and now he leads the life of the new man, as the Apostle says; that is, he participates in the divine life of the Savior, working in union with Him, neglecting none of His graces, but ever docile to His Spirit; thus the cassock and surplice are symbolical of the twofold change in the cleric which we, with the Apostle, have called death and life.

The cassock or soutane, the first vestment donned by the cleric, is that which most distinguishes him. Its mystical significance is that of a winding sheet, implying that he no longer lives according to the flesh: humanity has yielded up to grace and is now dead and laid away in him. The surplice,

white and fair, worn over the sombre cassock, and donned for all functions which directly refer to God, brings to mind the glory of the risen Savior and is intended to prefigure the holiness and glory with which Jesus Christ clothes His elect. It gives token that the cleric has entered the sanctuary only that he may partake of their spirit and have part in their holy offices. Such is the external appearance of the tonsured, a sensible expression of what, according to the Apostle, transpires and is gradually, but surely, wrought in the soul of every faithful cleric: "*Expoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis et induentes novum, eum qui renovatur secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit illum. Existimate vos mortuos quidem esse peccato viventes autem Deo in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.*" [1] All writers are agreed on this explanation.

XLVIII.

THE SOUTANE STRIKINGLY SUGGESTIVE OF MORTIFICATION WHICH IS THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN AND PARTICULARLY OF CLERICAL LIFE.

In fact it would be difficult to conceive anything more so. For, first of all, the color is that of mourning

[1] Colossians, III, 9-10, Rom., VI, 11.

and bespeaks naturally death and the tomb. It preaches of immolation, mortification, and penance.[1]

Secondly, as it covers the entire body, save the hands and head, it shows how complete should be the cleric's mortification, declaring that every one of the senses should in some way bear resemblance to the crucified Savior, acting unrestrained only under the inspiration and in the service of the Divine Master.[2]

Thirdly, while preaching mortification and penitence, the soutane necessitates at the same time a certain practice of both in the wearer, since its color and style are utterly different from anything that the world affects in order to be attractive or to flatter natural vanity. Whoever takes the cassock must, to be consistent and honest with himself, give up stylish clothes; he now should have other concerns and ambitions than to be up to date. Clothes, provided they be neat and respectable, should give him no other concern. The fashion

[1] Visum est nigrum hunc colorem magis humilitati, magis poenitentiae, magis luctui convenire. (V. Pet. Clun. *ad St. Ber.* t. I, 222.)

[2] Christo occiso, omnes ministri conformari debent. (St. Thos. Suppl., p. 39, a. 4.) Homines sacros tum interius tum exterius oportet mortificationem Jesu circumferre in suo corpore. (St. Cyril. Alex., *De Ador. in Spir.*, II.)

plates should have no interest for him. The style and cut and color are chosen for him once and for all, and it remains for him to accept them. Vanity, foolish pride, fastidiousness, or foppishness are unworthy of a man who professes with the Apostle that he bears upon his person not only the image, but the reality and practice of the mortification of Jesus Christ.[1]

Finally, the soutane is the ordinary clerical habit. In countries where it is worn in public and habitually, a cleric ought never to be seen without it. In our country we who are clerics ought at least never to lay aside all or any of our civil clerical dress. We may not wear the cassock, but we should never be seen by the faithful in anything but black. Our clothes, too, should be of clerical length and cut without pretence to style. Thus we shall be ever mindful of the character of the life we have chosen, and our appearance will edify the faithful and be a continual object lesson to them and to ourselves in the Christian duty of mortification and penance.

[1] Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in corporibus nostris. Semper enim nos qui vivimus, in mortem tradimur propter Jesum, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in carne nostra mortali. (II *Cor.*, IV, 10, 11.)

XLIX.

DOES THE SURPLICE SIGNIFY THE BIRTH OF THE NEW MAN, THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, THE TRULY DIVINE LIFE, IN THE SOUL OF A WORTHY CLERIC VESTED WITH IT?

What other significance could it have, or what could more fittingly express this state of soul?

1. Its color is the very contrast of the soutane and represents the innocence, virtue and uprightness of life with which the true Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ, wishes to adorn the souls of his ministers.[1] Its whiteness is pure and perfect, without fleck or stain; like a pure sun ray, combining in perfect harmony the most varied shades and tints. What could more naturally image sanctifying grace; the fairness it gives, the beauty with which it adorns, the charity with which it enriches the soul, and in which all other virtues blend? You remember how the Gospels and Scripture tell of the whiteness of the

[1] Ut vita Jesu manifestetur in carne vestra mortali. (II Cor., IV, 11.) Hae aliae vestes munditiam vitae indicant, quia justum est ut clerici in sanctitate et justitia Deo serviant. (Honor., *Gemma animae* I, n. 232.)

Savior's garments in His transfiguration,[1] or of the angels at the sepulchre[2] and on the Mount of Olives, and of the army of the martyrs and the multitude of the elect who were seen by St. John in his symbolic visions,[3] and again of the neophytes, regenerated in the waters of baptism, making their entrance to the Church by way of the sacred fonts.[4]

2. To this analogy ecclesiastical writers add others which make its symbolism more perfect and clear.

The material of which it is made, that is, its flaxen tissue has not, they say, naturally such pure whiteness. But in order to be used in the divine worship the flax must go through a drastic process, ending with washing and purification, that all the grosser elements may be removed. So it is with our souls: grace and virtue do not come with birth, nor are they acquired altogether without pain and effort. If we would acquire that holiness and perfection worthy of the holy altar, which moreover, can assure Our Lord of becoming homage

[1] Matt. XVII, 2 Mark IX, 2 Luke IX, 29.
[2] John, XX, 12. *Acts*, I, 10. [3] *Apoc.* VI, 11.
[4] Accipe vestem candidam, sanctam et immaculatam, quam perferas sine macula ante tribunal Christi, ut habeas vitam aeternam. (*Ritual.*)

and service, we must begin by mortifying and subduing the flesh through the exercise of true and solid virtue.[1]

In the second place, the more fair the whitness of the surplice the greater its likelihood of being soiled. The least touch may diminish its beauty and leave there a stain or blemish; yet no blemish but can be washed and removed, and, to restore to the surplice its lost cleanliness it is not at all necessary to go again through the original process which made it fair and white. So it is again with soul. However spotless the virtue of a cleric it can be tarnished. The least fault changes and soils it, but penance and mortification now, as before, will bring back its pristine purity, chastening it anew, and restore its own and perhaps an added lustre.

The Church, then, has with wise intent given the surplice to her ministers as a symbol of the innocence and holiness with which they must appear before God in rendering Him their homage.

[1] Byssus est genus lini candidissimi et ad summam candorem multa vexatione et ablutione perductum. Significat autem perfectam carnis munditiam, secundum illud quod in Apocalypsi legitur: "Byssus sunt sanctificationes sanctorum." Hanc munditiam caro sacerdotis ex se non habet, sicut linum ex se non est candidum, sed multis castigationibus et ablutionibus redditur candidum. (Yvo Carn., *Serm.* III, Cf. St. Thos 2a–2ae, q. 81, a. 8.)

L.

THE WORDS UTTERED BY THE BISHOP WHILE VESTING THE TONSURED WITH THE SURPLICE CONFIRM THESE EXPLANATIONS.

The bishop's words are to this ceremony what the form is to the matter in the conferring of a sacrament: they give the reason of it and declare its significance.

When the pontiff says to the tonsured, in the name of the Church, "*Induat te Dominus novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis,*"[1] it is as if he said, "Understand well what I do at this moment and why I do it." Do not confine your attention to the externals of this mystery, but enter thoroughly into the meaning with which the Church invests this rite. What matters it to her that your body is clothed in this or another garb? It is to the soul she looks, and therein hopes to find in abundance supernatural adornments; the virtues of the Savior together with His merits, His grace and the many communications of His Holy Spirit. She

[1] *Ephesians*, IV, 34.

knows that God wills to heap these upon you and therefore prays you to second the accomplishment of His designs: "*Induat te Dominus novum hominem!*" Ah! then, accept with all the gratitude of your heart the blessings He wishes to shower upon you.[1] May He clothe you with His gifts as the sun with its light. May your soul be so adorned that it will seem a new creature, that, under whatsoever aspect it be viewed, one may no longer see in it only the vitiated and weakened nature of the child of Adam, held in the bondage of pride, sensuality, selfishness, or avarice of the old man,[2] but rather, and only the spirit of the new man, his humility, his gentleness, his modesty, patience, and chastity; in fine, every virtue that He who is come from heaven to regenerate us in sanctity and justice has manifested to us, that thus we again may partake of that divine life once lost, but which He brings again to us.[3] And thus may others, observing your life and

[1] Tu ergo, fili mi, confortare in gratia quae est in Christo Jesu. (II *Tim.*, II, 1.)

[2] Edocti estis deponere vos veterem hominem qui corrumpitur secundum desideria erroris. (*Eph.*, IV, 12.)

[3] Induite vos ergo, sicut electi Dei, sancti et dilecti, viscera misericordiae, benignitatem, humilitatem, modestiam, patientiam. (*Col.*, III, 12.)

hearing your speech, be forced to say of you: Indeed it is no longer he who lives; no longer know we the corrupt child of Adam, the man of the world; but it is Jesus Christ who lives in him, whose spirit animates him, whose grace fills his soul and guides him in all things like a true member of His mystical Body, as a child of God and another Christ: *"Alter Christus!"* [1]

These, then, are the bishop's words to the tonsured, which ought to be recalled to mind whenever the surplice is put on.[2] God grant you may take well to heart this instruction and show it by your life.

[1] Dicitur induere Christum qui imitatur: quia sicut homo continetur vestimento et sub ejus colore videtur, ita in eo qui Christum imitatur opera Christi apparent. (S. Thom. *in Rom.* XIII, 14.)—Primus homo de terra terrenus, secundus homo de coelo coelestis. Sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus nunc imaginem coelestis. (I *Cor.*, XIV, 47.)

[2] Dum superpelliceum induit, clericus cogitet quam personam sustineat, nempe a sordibus labeque puram, qualem vestitus ille indicat. (*Conc. Med.*, V, p. 3.)—Attendat ut signum sine significato non ferat et vestem sine virtute non portet. (Inn. III, *De Missa* I, 64.)

LI.

WHAT IS PARTICULARLY TO BE REMARKED IN THE PRAYERS OFFERED FOR THE TONSURED AND IN THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE BISHOP?

Three things are especially brought into relief:

1. The dignity of the ecclesiastical state. In proportion to the cleric's detachment of heart, he is so far superior to men of the world. He now takes his place among the princes of the Church and partakes of the glorious royalty of the Savior. In his eyes the condition of men of the world is little better than servitude, and the secular habit is without honor.[1]

2. The purity of intention with which one must enter therein. The bishop takes ever for granted that the tonsured has no other motive than the love of God,[2] that all his inclinations are towards the sanctuary, that he desires no other portion

[1] Attollite portas, principes, vestras et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriæ. (Ps. XXIII, 7.)—Ab omni servitute saecularis habitus hos famulos tuos emunda, dum ignominiam saecularis habitus deponunt. (*Pontif. De cler. fac.*)

[2] Ad deponendum comas pro amore Dei festinant. (*Pontif.*)

nor has any other hope than the Savior Himself, and that he seeks nought but His glory, with a simple and honest heart.[1]

3. The holiness in which one should live. The bishop exhorts the faithful to ask of God for the ordained the same Divine Spirit which sanctified the Apostles. And he himself begs the Lord to free the hearts of the tonsured from all carnal affection, to illumine their minds with the light from heaven, to make them strong in His service, to give them such increase of holiness that they may seem to be new men, and to give them so constant a devotion to holy Church that they one day may be in possession of their eternal heritage.[2] And lastly, he prays Heaven to make of them perfect Christians, each a living image of the new Adam, the head and model of regenerated humanity; to clothe them in the virtues of the Savior, and to communicate to

[1] Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus, mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis; etc. (Ps. XV.)—Haec est generatio quaerentium Dominum. (*Pontif.*)

[2] Ut donet eis spiritum sanctum . . . ut lumen eis aeternae gloriae concedat . . . Ut in ejus dilectione perpetuo maneant, et eos sine macula in sempiternum custodiat . . . Ut sicut immutantur in vultibus, ita dextera manus ejus virtutis tribuat eis incrementa. . . Ut et devoti in Ecclesia permaneant et vitam percipere mereantur aeternam; etc. (*Pontif. De cler. fac.*)

each, together with the spirit of justice and holiness, a real and complete detachment from created interests and an unqualified devotion to the service of God.

* * *

It is seen that we give here only the principal features of the ordination. Each word of the Pontifical is worthy of attentive consideration, and one cannot more profitably prepare for Tonsure, or any of the orders, than by meditating often upon it.

CHAPTER V.

CLERICAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS.

LII.

WHY THE CHURCH INSISTS THAT THE EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE CLERIC BE DISTINCTIVE.

Though in this and some other countries clerics are not required to wear the soutane constantly, or the shaven crown, yet the authorities have prescribed a manner of dress quite as truly though less noticeably distinctive, and for the very same reason. The cleric's external appearance should be suggestive of his internal dispositions. Wherefore, in order that clerics may be ever kept in mind of the obligations and the character of their profession, and also that edification and instruction may be derived by the faithful, the Church insists that a clerical mode of dress be observed. For though it is of some consequence that a cleric renounce the world upon his entrance into the clerical state, it is of a deal more that he persevere

in his renunciation. That he does so persevere may be clearly signified in one way at least, by never laying aside the received clerical attire whether wholly or in part. Whence it follows that such a liberty may be taken only for such reasons of danger or serious inconvenience as are recognized by the Church.[1]

LIII.

IS A CLERIC REQUIRED TO APPEAR ALWAYS IN CLERICAL DRESS?

1. For those in sacred orders who live in provinces under canon law, this obligation is strict and general. In our country the will of the bishop is law in each diocese. In general it must be said that every seminarian, whether cleric or not, should always wear clothes of black and of proper cut. The further advanced in orders, the more strictly

[1] Non excidat a te quomodo in tonsura capitis, quando electus es in sortem Dei, renuntiasti ignominiae laicali. Super abrenuntiatione saecularium emisisti vota quae distinxerunt labia tua. Alligatus es verbis oris tui, ubi sine exceptione aliqua promisisti quod de caetero a terrenis negotiis te alienares tuamque sollicitudinem divinis semper negotiis mancipares. (Pet. Bles. *De inst. Episc.*, IV.)

is this rule to be observed. The Council of Trent does not mince words on this subject when it says; "Clerics are not to dispense themselves from wearing their prescribed dress, since the modesty of their external appearance bears testimony to the solidity and truth of their virtue It indeed happens in these times that some ecclesiastics have no scruple in going about in secular dress, affecting to walk in two paths at the same time, or, in other words, to serve God and the world, but they do so to the disgrace of religion and to the prejudice of their dignity as ministers of Christ." The Council then sanctions its ordinances by severe penalties, such as suspension, for a first offence, and for a second, the forfeiture of position or benefice (Clement V. in the Council of Vienne). The mind of the Chu.ch, then, is clear.

2. For those who are simply tonsured or in minor orders, it would appear that the obligation is not so strict; but if they have the spirit of their vocation and due respect for the will of the Church and the express wishes of the seminary directors, they will have no hesitancy about conforming with the rest of the clergy, as far as is desirable. For, to begin with, it was not to see them lay aside their

garb for any part of their life as ecclesiastics, that the Church has prescribed it and prayed that they may wear it with honor to themselves and to her. Secondly, the reasons which prompted her to prescribe it, namely the desire of good order, the interests of the clergy, the edification of the faithful, are enough to recommend it to any right minded individual and convince him of his obligation. Thirdly, the result of the decrees of Trent have been to forbid the promotion to office or benefice of anyone who lays aside clerical dress: Pope Sixtus V, issued a Bull to this effect in 1589. And, finally, hardly a Council, synod, or bishop even, but has reiterated all this, and, in our country, the clergy have so universally conformed to the regulations of the Council of Baltimore that any cleric who would make an exception of himself would certainly give considerable disedification, if not scandal, and would warrant reasonable doubt as to his vocation.

LIV.

IS THERE ANY POSSIBLE MOTIVE WHICH CAN JUSTIFY A CLERIC IN DRESSING AS AN ORDINARY LAY PERSON?

1. No doubt, the wearing of a clerical habit has often been a source of danger to the wearer; but that was in other times and countries. In our country to-day the priestly garb is quite universally respected. Hence, fear on that score is out of the question.

2. Next comes the matter of inconvenience. It is conceivable that this might in extraordinary circumstances amount to something serious. But the circumstances must be extraordinary and the motive for laying aside any part of the ecclesiastical attire should be pure.

LV.

WHAT OTHER REASONS CAN BE GIVEN FOR DONNING ORDINARY LAY ATTIRE, AND WHAT IS THEIR RESPECTIVE WORTH?

1. Can it be that a cleric does not wish to be recognized as such and because of some incon-

venience lays aside whatever might be suggestive of his character? If so, his motives are certainly not of the best. Having freely chosen his state and accepted its requirements he foresaw all this and should now live up to them. Besides, if he is a good cleric, living as his condition demands, then it should be his wish, as his duty, to afford his fellow Christians the edification such a life can give.

2. It is more than likely, however, that he secularizes his appearance for reasons other than those of mere inconvenience. Perhaps it is from a covetousness of the freedom the wordly dress gives. He wishes not only to look like a layman, but to act like one. It is unnecessary to inveigh against this. Our Savior's words should be enough; "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." Worldly pleasures are for the cleric no more. However, the Church knows well the temptations that beset her ministers and in her motherly wisdom has given the clerical habit and attire to those who accept the yoke of the ministry. They who accept and faithfully wear it find it a safeguard, a check upon their treacherous nature, and a reminder of their priestly dignity. They who set it aside, even for

ever so brief a time, commit the folly of a soldier who would leave behind his coat of mail when going into combat. For it is not when about their sacred functions or duties, when they are most safe, that they expose themselves, but rather, when in idleness or idle pastime, if not worse. Let experience be our teacher, as well as the word of God: both say that they who love the danger shall perish in it.

3. The motive is sometimes put a little more plausibly: they say that they wish to indulge in certain things not wrong in themselves, but at which the finer sensibilities of pious persons might be shocked, and, of course, they are unwilling to give the least disedification. A most worthy and commendable purpose, but an equally unworthy and reprehensible course. If their acts would really disedify right minded persons, or anybody at all, they are unworthy of an ecclesiastic. Our duty is to give edification and if we have the charity of our calling we will refrain altogether, emulating the charity of St. Paul, lest we scandalize a soul for whom Christ died. For what is gained, if, by concealing our identity to avoid disedification, we go counter to the will of the Church and displease the

Almighty? It is a good thing not to disedify, but it is a far better course, and more worthy of a cleric, to choose what is edifying and at the same time pleasing to God. A cleric who so acts gives testimony that his "*Dominus Pars*" was for him a real profession and not a mere formality. He will be a priest after God's own heart.

LVI.

DOES AN IRREPROACHABLE CLERICAL APPEARANCE CONSIST IN THE MERE CONFORMITY TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL REGULATIONS?

It is almost needless to say that the cleric must respect his costume. As everyone recognizes, and as has already been said, the costume is but suggestive of interior dispositions, while conduct and works are the expression of the same: wherefore, exterior deportment and exterior dress should be altogether in keeping.

But there is yet another word to be said. It is possible to conform to the regulations substantially though not in spirit. For example, wordliness can find quite as much expression in a cassock or

clerical suit, as in ordinary secular apparel, whether in style or in material. Exactness of fit, variety in style, attempts to approach as closely as possible to the secular fashion, richness of texture, etc., all these can engross the mind of a cleric as much as though he were still of the world. But it should not be. He has not merely changed the color and style of his clothes; he has changed his ideas. He has put away the things that pamper the foolish vanity of worldlings. He is occupied, or should be, with weightier considerations, and life is something more than an effort to approach the perfection of the fashion plate. This of course does not mean to be negligent or coarse in dress. Dress well and simply, in a manner befitting your dignity. Follow the example of men who have preceded us in our holy calling: bishops, priests, and simple clerics. St. Augustine is particularly worthy of imitation. Without being indifferent in the matter, he would still have only what was ordinary.

Once when a young woman of Hippo presented him with a tunic which she had made for her brother, a deacon at Carthage who had died, St. Augustine accepted it because of its simplicity and took occasion to speak to the people, saying he could

accept and wear only simple vestments such as became a minister of Christ. It is certainly edifying that a bishop should wear the tunic of a deacon.[1]

Those who have received but tonsure certainly may not consider themselves above this. St. Francis de Sales used to say that frugality at the table and simplicity in dress were marks of a true priestly spirit, and those who observed neither were lacking in true charity for their neighbor. The fact is, at all events, that nothing elevates a minister of God in the eyes of men more than a sincere and wholesome contempt for the finery, luxury, or vanity with which the greater part of humanity is preoccupied. "*Joannes habebat vesitmentum de pilis camelorum et zonam pelliceam circa lumbos suos; esca autem ejus erat locustae et mel sylvestre. Tunc exibat ad eum omnis Jerosolyma et omnis Judaea.*" Mat., III, 4.

[1] Epist. CCLXIII—Serm. CCCLVI, *De vita et mor. cler.*, 13.

LVII.

BESIDES MODESTY AND SIMPLICITY, WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A CLERIC FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE FAITHFUL?

Since seminarians spend at least some portion of the time, during their course, in the world where they are observed by the people, in order to edify those about them and at the same time honor their state, they cannot do better than to observe the following:

1. To be faithful, modest, and devout, in their attendance at Mass and other offices of the Church.[1]

2. To communicate frequently and with devotion.[2]

3. To employ their time becomingly and with profit, following the advice of their director.[3]

4. To avoid occasions of sin by all means, and also places of public amusement, social gatherings, especially if they be frivolous or idle pastimes,

[1] "Melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia!" (Ps. LXXXIII.)

[2] Diaconi, subdiaconi, et reliqui clerici confessionem et communionem frequentent. (*Conc. Med.*, II, *Tit.*, 2.)

[3] Nec sanctior David nec Samsone fortior, nec Salomone potes esse sapientior. (St. Aug.)

and instead, take up some light and profitable reading, or anticipate the ministry by works of zeal and mercy.[1]

5. To associate with or cultivate the acquaintance of worthy ecclesiastics, and seek of them whatsoever may help to a better understanding and appreciation of the holy ministry.[2]

[1] Te semper inveniat occupatum diabolus. (St. Jerome, *Ep. ad Rust.*)

[2] Vive cum paucis, et cum paucis invenire merearis in regno Dei. (Cassian. *Abb. Paphn.*)—In clericum electus, agito quae clerici sunt; et inter eos sectare meliores, quia in omni conditione et gradu, optimis mixta sunt pessima. (St. Jerome, *Epist. ad Rust.*)

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

LIX.

WHAT IS THE PRIESTLY OR CLERICAL SPIRIT?

It is a precious grace, the effect of which is a communication of the holy dispositions of Our Lord and Sovereign priest to the ministers of His Church, disposing them to fulfill[1] their duties and functions readily and with relish. It is the spirit of zeal for the honor and glory of the Majesty of Heaven and the sanctification of souls. It inspires one with an exalted esteem for the priesthood and for

[1] Jesus venit Nazareth die Sabbati in synagogam et surrexit legere; et ubi revolvit librum invenit locum ubi scriptum erat: Spiritus Domini super me; propter quod unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me. Et cum plicuisset librum, coepit dicere ad illos: Quia hodie impleta est haec scriptura in auribus vestris. (Luke., IV, 18.) Insufflavit Jesus et dixit: Accipite spiritum sanctum. (John, XX, 20.) Non dedit nobis spiritum timoris, sed virtutis et dilectionis. (II Tim., I, 7.) Sufficientia nostra ex Deo est, qui et idoneos nos fecit ministros Novi Testamenti, non littera, sed spiritu. (II Cor., III, 5.)

Holy Orders, and makes one to exercise their functions with intelligence, devotion, and modesty. More than all, or rather, to sum up all, it prompts them to a life in keeping with the holiness of their vocation, making of them a source of edification to the faithful, and nourishing in them an ardent desire to advance always in the perfection of their state. Would to God that no one might ever enter the ranks of the clergy lacking this spirit, and would, too, that all who have it might, with the care and application it deserves, cherish and develop it in their souls.[1]

LX.

WHAT FOUNDATION HAS THE TEACHING THAT EVERY-ONE CALLED TO THE CLERICAL STATE IS DESTINED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ESPECIAL MANNER IN THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SOVEREIGN PRIEST?

It rests on two fundamental dogmatic truths: The first is, that God calls no one to any state in life without giving him, in due time, all the graces

[1] Excita quaesumus Domine, in Ecclesia tua, Spiritum quo Beatus Laurentius Levita servivit, ut eodem nos repleti, studeamus amare quod amavit, et opere exercere quod docuit. (Orat. Eccl.)

needed for a fitting preparation and for a worthy fulfillment of its duties.[1] And thus it is that, at the sight or mention of a good priest, who lives up to his vocation and is holy and faithful in the exercise of his functions, we hear people say, "That priest was really called by God and has the spirit of his calling."

The second fundamental truth is, that Jesus Christ is the source of supernatural virtue, and from Him come all graces to His Church and members. If they are holy, or become such, it is only through a participation in His life and spirit, since there can be no merit save through Him.[2]

What the soul is to the body, in the order of

[1] Ecce vocavi ex nomine Bezeleel filium Uri, et implevi eum spiritu Domini, sapientia et intelligentia ut faciat tabernaculum, etc. (Ex. XXXI, 2, 11.) Irruit spiritus Domini in Samson et sicut ad odorem ignis solent ligna consumi, ita vincula quibus ligatus erat dissipata sunt. (Jud., XV, 14.) Illos quos ad aliquid elegit Deus, ita praeparat ut ad id quod eliguntur idonei inveniantur. (St. Thos., p. 3, ¶ 27, a. 4.) Deus cuilibet rei dat per quae possit consequi perfectionem suæ naturae. Unde quia constituit ministros Novi Testamenti, dedit et eis idoneitatem ad hoc officium exercendum, nisi sit impedimentum ex parte recipientium. (S. Thom., *in* II *Cor.*, III.)

[2] Sicut enim Pater habet vitam in semetipso, sic dedit et Filio habere vitam in semetipso. (John., V, 26.) * De plenitudine ejus nos accepimus. (Id., I, 16.) Participes Christo effecti sumus. (Heb., III, 14.)

nature, the spirit of Jesus Christ is to the Church.[1] We speak of the Church as the mystical body of the Savior, and of Christians as the members of either or both. Then, since the soul, in vivifying the entire body, vivifies its every member, imparting strength and activity to each according to its importance and functions, so the spirit of Jesus Christ, which sanctifies and directs the whole Church,[2] directs and sanctifies at the same time each and every member thereof, according to its position and function. Thus each Christian receives graces suited to his state. God gives to each the spirit of his calling that he may work out his salvation and sanctification.

Following this principle, it is readily understood that a variety of states means a variety in graces and spirit. The religious spirit, or monastic spirit, is of necessity distinct from the ordinary Christian spirit. And again, in every state, difference of spirit exists according to difference of employment,

[1] Numquid corpus meum vivit de spiritu tuo? Melius vivit de spiritu meo, et tuum de spiritu tuo. Non potest vivere corpus Christi, nisi de spiritu Christi. (S. Aug., *In Joan.*, *Tr.* XXVI, 13.)

[2] Deus, cujus spiritu totum corpus Ecclesiae sanctificatur et regitur. (*Orat. Eccl.*)

position, or need. In the every day life of the world we recognize the graces received by the faithful, according as they live in virginity, or are married, etc. In the religious life, there are the professed and lay; the Trappist, Dominican, Jesuit, etc., each requiring a different grace and spirit as they differ in kind or degree, purpose and work.[1]

In consequence, it is hardly necessary to say that ecclesiastics also enjoy graces special to their state and are endowed with a corresponding spirit. Called, as they are, to the sublimest and holiest of functions, and set apart for the exclusive service of God and for the sanctification of their brethren, it is clear that they, more than anyone, have need of great and special graces. And Jesus, Our Sovereign Priest, who never fails His friends, is in this most generous, for He communicates to His chosen ministers, His own dutiful and loving regard for His heavenly Father, His charity towards all men, and His zeal for divine sacrifice. This is the priestly spirit, the grace of the priesthood, the communication of Jesus Christ to His ministers.

[1] Unusquisque sicut accepit gratiam, illam administrantes, sicut boni dispensatores multiformis gratiae Dei. (I Pet., IV, 10. Cfr. Rom. XII, 6; I Cor. XII, 11.)

LXI.

COULD ANYTHING BE BETTER CALCULATED TO DEVELOP THIS PRIESTLY SPIRIT THAN THE SEMINARY?

Seminary life, that is, a faithful observance of the rule during the time, as well as at the place prescribed by the ecclesiastical authorities, is certainly the best preparation for Holy Orders and the surest way to acquire the priestly spirit. In fact, it is safe to say, that all other means can be dispensed with, since this combines all; the chief of which are, retirement from the world and regularity of life.

But seminary life is not the mere putting in of a few years at an institution, together with a perfunctory performance of its prescribed exercises;[1] rather, it means a compliance with the rule thereof, not only, with fidelity, but even with relish, in the view of pleasing God and meriting His graces.[2]

[1] Simile est regnum coelorum decem virginibus. Quinque autem ex eis erant fatuae et quinque prudentes. (Matt. XXV, 1.) Non Jerosolymis fuisse, sed Jerosolymis bene vixisse laudandum est. (St. Jerome, *Ep. ad Paulin.*, LVIII, 2.)

[2] In disciplina perseverate. Omnis disciplina in praesenti quidem videtur non esse gaudii, sed moeroris: postea autem

It is not enough to assist at instructions, or even to seek direction such as the seminary affords, unless one do so with docility and become thoroughly imbued with what one hears through continual and serious meditation.[1]

No one need flatter or deceive himself by thinking that his seminary course means anything else, or that, by doing anything else, he is preparing for ordination or acquiring the spirit of his calling.

fructum pacatissimum exercitatis per eam reddet justitiae. (Hebr., XII, 11.)

[1] Adolescentes qui singulari Dei beneficio sunt delecti ut in seminario instituantur, id potissimum intelligere debent cujus gratia seminaria instituta sunt, omnesque nervos intendere ut illud divina ope ad animarum salutem, ad Ecclesiae utilitatem et pastorum solatium, consequantur. Sunt igitur ea potissimum de causa seminaria erecta ut in iis boni strenuique operarii ad curationem animarum quos suo pretiosissimo sanguine Christus redemit, instituantur, et adolescentes eam vitae perfectionem adipiscantur, quae in iis qui ductores populi futuri sunt, elucere debet. Quapropter unusquisque sit ea mente et voluntate, idque sibi proponat ut omnino velit in bonum ministrum pro Ecclesiae adjumento evadere seque, Deo juvante, purum ab omni peccato preservare, totoque animo singulis diebus Deo se offerat, ut se ad predictum finem idoneum efficiat operarium. (St. Charles, *De institu. Semin.*, p. III, c. 1.)

LXII.

IS IT NECESSARY THAT THOSE WHO ARE DESTINED TO THE HOLY MINISTRY SHOULD MINGLE WITH SOCIETY IN ORDER TO KNOW ITS IDEAS AND WAYS?

In a measure, yes. He that is called to the clerical state, will lead the life of neither monk nor recluse. But, it by no means follows that he is to mix up in worldly society, or to adopt its ways in order to know men. This may be necessary for diplomats and civil leaders, but not so with the cleric whose only concern in life is to be the welfare of the Church and the salvation of souls. What he has to do and to apply himself to, is incomparably more important and sublime: he is to learn the science of the saints, to study Jesus Christ crucified, to imbibe the spirit of the Apostles, and to emulate their virtues. Let him in the seminary learn charity, humility, and detachment; let him so dispose his will as to be ready to devote all, even life to those whom Jesus Christ has ransomed with His blood; to become all things to all men that he may gain them to the Divine Savior; let him instruct himself solidly in the truths of faith and be well grounded in the maxims of salvation, by

faithful and attentive meditation on the word of God. This done, the fruitfulness and holiness of his ministry are assured. The faithful will love him and all will respect him more than if he had all the polish of a worldling or all the profane science possible to be had. Let him not fear that he will be lacking in needed knowledge of men. Christ "who knows what is in man" is his Master and will teach him all, if he will but learn.[1]

LXIII.

IS IT A RASH JUDGMENT TO THINK THAT SOME ECCLESIASTICS HAVE NEVER HAD THE SPIRIT OF THEIR VOCATION, AND THAT OTHERS HAVE BEEN SO WRETCHED AS TO LOSE IT?

Unfortunately no.[2] Those of the first class are indeed few, yet very culpable. Like Balaam, they

[1] Est quod mihi de sacerdotibus saecularis ordinis displicet quia sicut saecularibus mixta regionariae civilitatis habitatione collimant, ita nihilominus plerique ab eorum conversatione et inconditis moribus non discordant. (S. Pet. Dam., *Cont. Cler. inscrit.*, I.)—Non excidat a te quomodo in tonsura capitis, quando electus es in sortem Domini, renuntiasti ignominiae laicoli. (Pet. Bles., *De Inst. Episc.*)

[2] In omni conditione et gradu, optimis permixta sunt pessima. (St. Jerome, *ad Rust.* CXXV, 17.) Hic jam quaeritur inter dispensatores ut fidelis quis inveniatur. (I Cor., IV, 2.)

are never other than carnal minded, *cujus obduratus est oculus*.[1] Considerations of selfish interest, ambition and material well-being alone awaken any response in their hearts, and their lives are spent in an almost complete indifference to God and the spiritual needs of their fellowmen. Their esteem for their priestly functions is hardly worthy of the name, while their conduct dishonors their state by its wordliness.

As for the other class, the case is little different in the end. They had the spirit once, but have lost it gradually, and now, though still clergymen, their lives are in no wise different from the lives of the ordinary lay folk in the world: they avoid serious faults and scandals;[2] they do not wholly neglect their duties of almsgiving and prayer; but once the indispensable duties of their ministry are discharged, they never utter a further word of edification to anyone whomsoever. Never do they undertake a good work, nor do they ever give a thought to the souls that are being lost around them, to the sins they themselves commit, to the precious

[1] Num., XXI, 3.

[2] Multi enim ambulant quos saepe dicebam vobis, inimicos crucis Christi, quorum finis interitus, qui terrena sapiunt. (Phil., III, 1.)

blood of the Savior which, as far as they are concerned, is shed in vain. Their books of piety and science have long since lost whatever attraction they ever had; Church work is wearisome; they come before the altar as seldom as possible; on ceremonies they are careless and too often wrong. In their worldly intercourse, however, they are quite different: they love amusement, society pleases them, they prefer the company of lay persons, and of course are occupied chiefly in idle pastimes, if not worse.[1]

Once a cleric resembles either of these types, put it down that he has lost, or at any rate, is without the spirit of his calling. It not rarely happens that the very friends of this same man are heard to say of him—"An excellent good fellow, but he made a mistake; he should not have become a priest."[2]

[1] Ipsi de mundo sunt: ideo de mundo loquuntur. (I John, IV, 5.)

[2] Sub habitu religionis cor saeculare. (St. Bern., *In Ps. Qui habitat Serm.* III, 4.)

LXIV.

IS WORLDLINESS OF LIFE STILL POSSIBLE EVEN IN THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH?

Happily, scandals of this sort are rare since the Church, by reason of despoliation in other countries and her still undeveloped state in this, has little that can excite cupidity, and, generally speaking, is far from being able or likely to furnish her ministers with means of living in the style or fashion of the world. But we need not imagine that we are any better than our predecessors, or that we are exempt from weaknesses to which they succumbed. One can be deprived of a thing and yet not be detached from it, just as one having considerable riches can still hold them in little esteem.[1] Moreover as the value of things is relative, the sanctuary, even now, has enough that is pleasing to nature and may well excite envy. Hence it is quite possible that, as the Church is in many places well established and in flourishing condition, materially at least, one could in aspiring to the clerical state have other

[1] Ipsas mundi amaritudines amamus, fugientem sequimur, labenti inhaeremus. (St. Greg. Magn.)

motives than the glory of God or the good of mankind. Other joys might be sought than those which flow from a true love of God, and perhaps, in one's heart there may be a secret acquiescence to certain natural aspirations, to parental wishes wherein cupidity has been known to have a part.[1] It can happen above all, to-day as well as formerly, that even after having given himself in all sincerity and generosity of heart to the service of God, an ecclesiastic can, little by little, cool in his first ardor and give in to the attractions which the world, though repeatedly spurned, never tires of offering. It may be that, after some years spent in practice of detachment, humility or mortification, the road may grow weary or lonely perhaps, he feels that he is somewhat singular or the suggestion comes that he is too hard on himself, and he decides to relax a little, to enjoy as far as he can the pleasure, the tranquil existence, and the agreeable society an honorable position can offer. This, mind you, is no mere conjecture or remote possibility. There

[1] Usitatus sermo, communis sermo: propter Deum; sed plane, ubi non vacue dicitur, profundissimus sermo. (St. Ber. *In Ps. Qui habitat, Serm.* IX, 2.) Quam rarus in terris qui possit dicere: Portio mea Dominus! (St. Amb., *In Ps.* CXVIII, *Serm.* 8.)

are to-day and always will be among the clergy, whatever be its material condition, men of mercenary motives seeking to make capital out of their ministry, either for themselves or for their relatives; men, vain and ambitious, who aspire to promotion, honors, and power; men seeking pleasure, whose chief aim in life is amusement, diversion, and good cheer. Natural concupiscence which survives in us all will accomplish this and more. It is a triple bond with which the demon lures clerics and faithful away from the way God in His wisdom has marked out; it is broken asunder only with difficulty.[1]

LXV.

CAN A CHRISTIAN SET VALUE ON WORLDLY GOODS AS SUCH?

A Christian who has a lively and solid faith, who is guided to his convictions by revealed truth, and who lives according to his convictions can have nothing but disdain and distrust for whatever the world esteems.

[1] Omne quod est in mundo concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae. (I John, II, 16.)—Funiculus triplex difficile rumpitur. (Eccli., IV, 12.)

"*Filii hominum,*" says the prophet, "*usquequo gravi corde, utquid diligitis vanitatem et quaeritis mendacium?*[1] *Beatus cujus est nomen Domini spes ejus, et non respexit in vanitates et insanias falsas.*" (Ps. XXXIX, 5.) "*Velut somnium surgentium, Domine in civitate tua imaginem ipsorum ad nihilum rediges*" (Ps. LXXII, 20). These are the words of David inspired of God. His son, Solomon, who knew by experience as well as by supernatural enlightenment the truth of these words, declared even more emphatically. "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity." Thus he begins the very first chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, and then, after a lengthy enumeration of the goods of which man may be possessed, the pleasures he may enjoy, and the means at his disposal for attaining happiness while on earth, Solomon repeats his maxim adding, "*Vidi et ecce universa vanitas et afflictio spiritus.*" In the Book of Wisdom these seemingly desirable things of earth are not pronounced upon more favorably: illusory, deceitful, charming, indeed, but worse than worthless, for they

[1] Ps. IV, 3. Nil desiderare de saeculo potest qui saeculo major est. (St. Cyp., *Ep. ad. Donat.*) Oculi tui Christi sunt: non igitur licet tibi oculos Christi ad vanitates conspiciendas dirigere. (St. Anselm, *Decem med.* I, 5.)

lead astray—such has God declared them and He knows; yet, how few take His word for it.

The Prophets are re-echoed by the Apostles. St. Paul avers warningly, "*Præterit figura hujus mundi*;"[1] and St. John reminds us, "*Et mundus transit et concupiscentia ejus.*"[2]

Faith, then, if it be strong and lively, means a distrust, a contempt even, for whatever the world sets store by; Divine wisdom has adjudged all as "vanity," "folly," "deceit"; a dream that vanishes, a figure that passes away, an affliction of spirit: and, it must be so. Surely, a tempting array in the eyes of a Christian.[3]

LXVI.

ARE THE EPITHETS "VANITY," "FOLLY," "DECEIT," "AFFECTION," AS APPLIED TO TEMPORAL GOODS TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE.

Just reflect on each and then decide for yourself.

First, *vanity*. Can you name anything this world has to offer that is of solid and permanent

[1] I Cor. VIII, 31. [2] I John II, 17.

[3] Haec igitur dico et testificor in Domino, ut jam non ambuletis sicut et gentes ambulant, in vanitate sensus vestris, tenebris obscuratum habentes intellectum, alienati a vita Dei, per ignorantiam quae est in illis propter caecitatem cordis ipsorum. (Eph., IV, 18.)

value? Must you not admit that, instead of helping you to the possession of the One True Good, the coveted things of life tend rather to make you forgetful of It? The fact is, that the more men are attached to temporalities, the less able are they to rise above grovelling considerations and desires; and the reason thereof is that their hearts set upon vanity, become vain. *"Cor eorum vanum est;"* [1] their minds feed upon vanity and hence they can reflect nothing else, *"Novit Dominus cogitationes hominum quoniam vanae sunt;"* [2] and, as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, *"vana locuti sunt."* [3] "Love unites, almost identifies us with that which we love; if the object of our affections be other than God what have we to expect?" says St. Augustine. Experience has given its verdict; you cannot gainsay it. It reveals a law from which there is no escape — "Love vanity, and vanity is your reward and portion." [4]

Secondly, it is *folly* pure and simple, to set one's heart on such things. Common sense tells a man

[1] Ps. V, 10. [2] Ps. XI. [3] Ps. XI, 3.
[4] Cui similem aestimabo generationem istam? Similis est pueris sedentibus in foro, qui clamantes coaequalibus dicunt: cecinimus vobis et non saltastis; lamentavimus et non planxistis. (Matt., XI, 16.)

to seek something that is worth while and abiding. But which are to be deemed such—the pleasures of limited duration, human respect, riches of a moment, a lifetime even, or the friendship of God and a blessed eternity with Him? The Spirit of Truth answers for you, if you have any hesitation, and says, very often too, that the sinner is a fool. And by the way, fools are as common as they are pitiable, for He also says that the number of such is infinite.[1]

The happiness of the world is a *deception*. The pleasures of life are not quite all that they seem: they are too often sugar coated pills, all bitterness within. They promise peace and security, but their promises are not always redeemed. They are warranted to ravish the soul; they may for a time; but that comes to end, or rather the end is not yet, for the soul is now a prey to cravings that must ever be denied. Liberty, happiness, contentment are other stock allurements to ignoble servitude, irremediable misfortune, to the irretrievable loss of God's love and His inconceivable joys. St. Augustine meditated on this and concluded that a gay

[1] Eccl., I, 15.

life or worldly preoccupation is, "*Ingens fabula longumque mendacium!*" [1]

Lastly these things are said to result in "*affliction of spirit.*" Rather a strange assertion, and surely exaggerated, since they are so much sought after. Let us see. Do the results gained balance well in the end with the effort and sacrifices they cost? Has the point of even solid contentment ever been reached—with no cloud on the horizon? But it is not during life and health that these questions can be honestly answered. Man's mind is clearer on this matter at the approach of death, and clearest in eternity. He knew always that he was made for God, but now he realizes it and yet, though the moment has come when God may be his possession, he hesitates. Can it be that he prefers the flesh-pots to the joys of Heaven? Surely if God, whose capacity for glory, love and happiness is infinite, finds His entire beatitude in Himself, then we poor creatures, who find pleasure, as we think in finite, insignificant objects, will find all we can possibly desire in Him. Yet men hesitate—and for no other

[1] Mentiuntur, moriuntur et in mortem trahunt. (St. Aug., *Epist.* XXXIX.)

reason than that they realize their mistake, and are grievously troubled thereat.[1]

No wonder that they are overwhelmed with regret and with unutterable sadness, when they see all that they prized slipping from them. The fleeting show which they thought to be real life is come to an end, and the curtain drops forever. They would have it otherwise, but they haven't anything to say as to what shall be done. Creatures, to which they thought themselves inseparably bound, now elude and mock them. This is affliction of spirit.[2]

If God, in His unfathomed mercy, deigns to open the eyes of the poor wretch on the brink of eternity, and by a ray of grace reveals to him the sad losses he has sustained through frivolous amusements or unseemly preoccupations, with what bitterness and regret will he repent of his course. "My God I have wasted a lifetime in forgetfulness of Thee. To think that I set my heart on baubles that vanish like so much smoke, when Thou didst deign

[1] Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et semper inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te. (St. Aug. *Conf.* I, c.)—Vae animae audaci quae speravit, si a te recessisset, se aliquid melius accepturam! (*Id.*, *Conf.* l. VI, c. Ult.)

[2] Siccine separat amara mors! (I Kings. XV, 32.)

to create me for Thyself!" [1] But what if the poor wretch utter no such contrite and humble confession and, instead, is grieved only because death is about to rend asunder, all too soon, the many ties which hold him to earth. Then, his is a misfortune indeed; positively there is none greater, nor can be.[2] His bitterness and affliction instead of ending with life only begins, to endure through an inevitable and awful eternity. The Book of Wisdom records the despairing self-reproaches of such unhappy worldlings, "These seeing shall be troubled with a terrible fear and shall be amazed. . . saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold now they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth. What hath pride profited us, . . . all

[1] Gustans gustavi paululum mellis et ecce morior. (I Kings, XXIV, 43.)

[2] Mors peccatorum pessima. Audi unde pessima. Mala siquidem in mundi amissione, pejor in carnis amissione, pessima in vermis ignisque duplici contritione. (St. Bernard, *Epist.* CV.)

those things are passed away like a shadow, whereof, when it is gone by, no trace can be found."[1]

If you still think there is even a note of exaggeration in this condemnation of the world's goods, one further consideration will set you right. It is this—have you ever noted the contrast between the final verdicts of men of faith and worldlings on their respective objects sought in life. The latter invariably repent of their ill choice and curse their folly. They do not find any word significant enough adequately to express their disgust, disappointment, or self-reproach. On the other hand, they regret sincerely that they did not seek what their more sober reason now tells them they should have sought. With the men who were guided by faith, however, the case is decidedly different. Invariably their choice is a source of unending and inexhaustible consolation; their regret, if they have any, is only that they did not choose more readily; not that they chose wrongly. "What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth, O God of my heart, my portion forever? I know that they who depart from Thee will perish miserably, and that those who set their heart upon

[1] Wisdom V, 2–10.

creatures Thou wilt abandon."[1] *"Sitivit in te anima mea. Quam multipliciter tibi caro mea!"*[2] *"Quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei!"*[3] Good and bad, worldlings and faithful agree on one thing, the worthlessness, the contemptibleness of anything life can offer when compared with the promises of faith. *"Omnia . . . arbitror ut stercora ut Christum lucrifaciam.*[4] *Gloriabor in spe gloriae filiorum Dei."*[5] The hope of the good, and the despair of the bad is in God, as also their misery or happiness; and nothing can make them waver or change their verdict.

LXVII.

CAN ONE WHO PRETENDS TO CHOOSE GOD AS HIS PORTION AND LOVE HIM AS HIS FATHER, CHERISH ANY ATTACHMENT TO CREATURES AS SUCH?

Hardly. Filial affection and sovereign love, such as should fill the heart of a true child of God, should exclude any undue regard for temporalities, and forbid any concern that would alienate him at all from God. Our heavenly Father is a jealous

[1] Ps. LXXII, 2. [2] Ps. LII, 2. [3] Ps. XLI, 3. [4] Phil. III, 8. [5] Rom., VI, 2.

parent and regards as His enemy, hateful and irreconcilable, anything that lures his children away from Him. The children may not think otherwise; if they do, then, in so far are they displeasing to Him, and in the same proportion is their filial love weakened or diluted. Therefore, be as good and as loving a son as you know how.

Again a dutiful and obedient child, particularly a cleric, has made profession that this world is to him, in all truth, as the desert to Israel. His progress through the arid wastes, the privations he willingly endures, are accomplished all with one mind, and, after the example of Jesus, he repeats oftener as he advances on life's way, "*Relinquo mundum et vado ad Patrem.*" [1]

LXVIII.

HAS OUR LORD EXPRESSED HIMSELF ON THIS MATTER?

Most emphatically. His whole life bespeaks an unqualified disregard, contempt for whatever the world holds precious. It would be hard to conceive how aversion or disgust could be better expressed.

[1] John, XVI, 28.

1. Just reflect: How He yearns continually to be rid of this life. *"Generatio perversa et incredula quousque ero vobiscum? Usquequo patior vos?"* [1]

We can understand this impatience. The crimes of Sodom were a sore tribulation to the just Lot. David raged with grief at the sight of the iniquities of his day. Why? Because David and Lot loved God and His law. What an affliction, then, must have been the sight of the vices and abominations of the world to the soul of the Son of God, whose love of justice and hatred of iniquity no man can conceive; to that Heart burning fiercely with the fire of charity, compared to which the zeal of Lot, of David, and of all the friends of God, is but a feeble spark.[2]

2. The unconcern and detachment He manifests on every occasion towards the world and everything worldly. He neither wishes to speak of it nor to be occupied with it: "My kingdom is not of this world," He says. By that He means that He does not care for kingdoms composed of such perverse

[1] Matt., XVII, 15.

[2] Sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus et excelsior coelis factus. (Hebr., VII, 26.)

subjects, nor does He seek any royalty and its honors, such as men have at their disposal. "I pray not for the world;" by this He gives the world to understand that if it would have any share in His love and bounty, it must change, and change radically.

3. The malediction He utters against it is enough to set one thinking. "Woe to the world because of scandals." He means, "woe betide you worldlings who by your licentious talk and baneful example bring damnation to your own souls and to the souls of others."

4. In very plain language He has told us what He thinks of worldlings and all belonging to them. They are the cockle overrunning the field of the Church, soon to be rooted up, tied into bundles and cast into the fire.[1] They are the citizens of impious Babylon. They are the abettors of idolatry, of lust, and of pride; but the day of their ruin is fixed and Hell will yawn beneath them and engulf them all forever. "A mighty angel raised aloft a huge rock and cast it into the sea, crying; Thus will Babylon, that great city, be hurled into the abyss,

[1] Colligite zizania et alligate ea in fasisculos ad comburendum. (Matt., XIII, 30.)

and of her not a trace will be found."[1] It is clear then, the Savior and worldlings have nothing in common. He abhorred worldliness while on earth as man; He still abhors it in Heaven and in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. It should be just as clear to our minds that we may entertain no other sentiments if we would be His disciples, He has said so; His Apostle has repeated it. If you think differently, then, do not flatter yourself that you belong, or can belong to Him.[2]

LXIX.

WORLDLINESS IS CONTAGIOUS AND EVERY CLERIC MUST GUARD AGAINST IT; BUT HOW?

In many ways, for of means and precautions there is no lack.

1. A frequent renewal of the *"Dominus Pars"* by positive acts, particularly when at prayer, Holy Communion, and on occasions, such as unfortunately

[1] Apoc. XVIII, 21. Inimica Sion civitatis magni regis est" Babylon, civitas diaboli. (St. Aug., *De civ. Dei*, XVII, 16.)

[2] Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu. (Phil., II, 5.) In hoc perfecta est caritas Dei nobiscum, quia sicut ille est et nos sumus. (I John, IV, 17.)

are met with frequently, when one sees worldlings acting with the utmost disregard for piety, justice, modesty, and charity.[1] If we have or would have in our breasts a spark of apostolic zeal we cannot behold these poor wretches sacrificing their immortal God,—given up to the indulgence of their passions and doing for the base idols of self what they refuse to God, without being stirred to righteous indignation, even as was generous hearted St. Paul at the sight of Athenian infidelity and idolatry.[2]

2. Let your conversation be such that listeners may know that you are a disciple of Him who spoke as never man spake before. The Gospel is your maxim and never, by any word of yours, approve, out of human respect, a proposition, or act either, that is at all questionable. Your ideas and standard of life are right, the only ones that are right; stand by them.[3]

[1] Videbitis in Babylonia deos aureos et argenteos et lapideos. . . videte ergo ne et vos similes efficiamini factis alienis. Visa itaque turba de retro et ab ante adorantes, dicite in cordibus vestris: Te oportet adorari, Domine. (Baruch, VI, 5.)

[2] Incitabatur spiritus ejus in eo, videns idololatriae deditam civitatem. (Acts, XVII, 16.)

[3] Noli erubescere testimonium Domini nostri Jesu Christi. (II Tim., I, 8.) Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem. (Gal., I, 10.)

3. Shun as far as possible, according to the advice of St. Peter, the concupiscence of all sorts, which is rife among men. Experience teaches that ecclesiastics who mingle much in society, who are fond of festivities, plays, and distractions, too soon lose the spirit of piety and become wrapped and absorbed in the present life. They bear out the words of the prophet in regard to Israel: "They have mingled with the Gentiles and have learned their works. They have imitated their example and adored their idols."[1] The advice of Holy Writ is intended for such as these: "Have nothing to do with such persons; go out from amongst them that you have no share in their iniquities."[2] They should so conduct themselves as to be able in all humility to say, as did the spouse of the younger Tobias, "you know, Lord, that I have not mingled with idlers in their amusements, nor have I associated with frivolous persons." Preoccupation with works of charity, will be your

[1] Commixti sunt inter gentes et didicerunt opera eorum. Et servierunt sculptilibus eorum et factum est illis in scandalum. (Ps. CV, 35.)

[2] Recedite, recedite; exite inde; pollutum nolite tangere; exite de medio ejus; mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini. (Is., LII, 11.)

safeguard against the frivolity and corrupting influence of the world.[1]

4. In fine the most efficacious way of preserving one's self from this weakening of the priestly spirit is to follow none of the manners or ways of laymen, and to be always distrustful and wary of the world's judgments and maxims. "Be not conformed to this world," is the advice of the Apostle.[2] Our Lord Jesus Christ says—"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But not so you: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is leader, as he that serveth."[3]

From this we can gather two lessons. First, that the Divine Master not only condemns the pride and tyranny of princes or rulers of this world, but ordains that the rulers of His kingdom abase rather than exalt themselves, and that the foremost among them be servants of the least.[4] Secondly, He gives them example of this that they may the

[1] Religio munda et immaculata apud Deum et Patrem haec est immaculatum se custodire ab hoc saeculo. (James, I, 27.)
[2] Nolite conformari huic saeculo. (Rom., XII, 2.)
[3] Luke, XXII, 25.
[4] Luke, XIV, 10.

better understand how they must differ in conduct from other men and what care they must take to practice those virtues most opposed to the vices of the world Their lives must provoke the same comment as was made of the Savior: "Let us therefore lie in wait for the just, because he is not of our turn, and he is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the Son of God." [1]

Realize, then, that in receiving Tonsure you make profession of being in nowise conformed to the world. Whatever the world rejects and makes little of, you are to esteem and love; what it cherishes you are to disregard. Oppose, then, humility, detachment, mortification, chastity, patience, and all Christian virtues to its pride, covetousness, sensuality, lusts, strife and self-sufficiency. Finally, with a good will aim at the spirit of a good priest, and to this end you will do well to adopt a tried motto—"Observe what the world does, and do the contrary." [2]

[1] Sap., II, 12.

[2] A. Bourdoise, *Sentences.*

LXX.

IF CLERICS OUGHT EVER BE DISTRUSTFUL OF WORLDLY GOODS, MAY THEY NOT AT LEAST SEEK ECCLESIASTICAL PREFERMENT, REVENUES, OR DIGNITIES ?

To this also we must answer no, and say that if it be possible they ought, in these matters, to be even more disinterested and detached. Ecclesiastical goods are a temptation to cupidity, and ecclesiastics who yield to it and take complacency in the possession of them are not less regretful nor less culpable than worldlings who set their hearts on secular vanities.

Not that spiritual dignities are not estimable or that all respect should not be shown to the dignitaries themselves; but it is one thing to esteem them and quite another to covet them and angle for them for the sake of the temporal advantages they afford.[1] To desire them for their intrinsic

[1] "I have found in all periods of history," wrote Bellarmine to his nephew, "many holy persons who refused dignities offered them, or who accepted only through pressure or compulsion, but I have yet to find a holy man who sought them."

worth, under the pretence of zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, is, to begin with, for the ordinary person at least, presumption if not rashness.[1] While, of course, to seek them for the sake of the consideration, the authority, the revenue, or other things they bring, is ambition, cupidity or covetousness pure and simple. Complacency in their possession, or the use of them for personal happiness or glorification are abuses varying in gravity as the duties of the office are grave and of consequence and require in the functionaries lofty and disinterested purposes.[2]

The writings of the Fathers as well as the Acts of Council abound in invective against ambition in clerics;[3] while the history of the Church attests that covetousness of ecclesiastical dignities has been in every age the source of incalculable evil.

[1] Plerumque fit ut qui magisterium pastorale cupiunt, operaturos se magna pertractant et aliud in imis intentio supprimat, aliud tractantis animo superficies cogitationis ostendat. Nam saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur, et fingit se de bono opere amare quod non amat, aut non amare quod amat. (S. Greg., *De cur. past.* I, 9.)

[2] Locus posterior, etsi ita teneatur ac ministraretur, ut decet; tamen indecente appetitur. (St. Aug., *De civitate.*, XIX, 9.)

[3] Cf. St. Bern. *De nov. et off. cler.* et *in Conc. Rhem.*

Anyway, there can be nothing more out of keeping with the declaration we made on the day of our entrance into the sanctuary. Of course a person while cherishing in his heart the hope of advancement, of being appointed to lucrative or comfortable position, may with his lips pronounce words to the effect that he takes God for His portion; but, in reality he does not give himself to God, nor does he seek God's interests primarily; he is looking out for self, or thinks he is.

And what does such a one bring to the Church, or what fruit can come of his ministry? As he has neither generosity nor merit, so there can come no blessing from heaven upon his works. For, the very same motive which decided him in his vocation will decide him in his acts. Whatsoever he may do is, of course, for self, and as God can be pleased with and bless only what is done in His service with pure and holy intentions, this ministry, which is nothing short of mercenary, must have little to commend it to Heaven. It is a waste of time and trouble.

Worse still, the life of this cleric cannot but be full of blame. There is little that such are not ready to do in order to raise themselves. An

ecclesiastic who is smitten with a desire for honors, etc., seldom lacks resolve even if he fail in attainment of it He has recourse to a variety of means, and is never without resource. Solicitations, adulations, attentions, dissimulations; hardly anything is too base for them provided they attain their end. They are shrewd and play any part well. Not a service that they will not render, or subjection to which they will not submit.[1] And it is not only their ecclesiastical superiors that they cajole and strive to curry favor with, but they even cultivate the acquaintance of people most unreligious and toady to them, if perchance these happen to enjoy some influence. While, as for themselves, these ecclesiastics put up with everything and find excuse for it. The functions of their holy ministry have no value in their eyes except in so far as they help to their advancement, keep them in the public eye, or bring them into the good graces of some influential person. In spirit they are as base

[1] Ambitio dicitur simia caritatis. Caritas enim patiens est pro æternis, ambitio pro caducis ; caritas benigna est pauperibus, ambitio divitibus; caritas omnia suffert pro veritate, ambitio pro vanitate. (Pet. Bles. *Sermo.*)—O quanta apud Deum merces, si in praesenti pretium non parerent! Minori labore margaritam Christi emi poterat. (S. Jerome, *Epist.*, XXXIV, 6.)

as they are proud yet all the while thinking themselves untainted by the infamy of Simon. Passion blinds them to their faults, and now by their mercenary and ambitious doings they have fallen under the anathema pronounced by St. Jude: *"Vae illis qui in via Cain abierunt et errore Balaam mercede effusi sunt et in contradictione Core perierunt!"* Jude, 11.[1]

A minister of Jesus Christ ought, then, to be detached from all goods that may be sought or attained in this life, whether they be worldly or ecclesiastical. God alone he chooses for his portion, and he should live up to his word. Though the esteem, support, and affection of his fellows will certainly come to him if he be a good priest, yet he is not to seek these. Towards his superiors he must be respectful only because they are worthy of it. His duties towards them are to be fulfilled religiously, and not for the sake of reward, nor for aid or patronage, nor to work himself into their good graces that thus he may obtain preferment. Let him bear in mind that he is to serve God, for God. The graces of God should suffice for his ambitions. All the goods besides, desirable as they may be in the eyes of the

[1] Superbi eorum ascendit semper. (Ps. LXXIII, 23.)

world, should appear to him as they really are, vanities, nothingness, if not worse. Should he be of another mind on this matter, there is something wrong radically.[1]

[1] Gloria nostra haec est testimonium conscientiae nostrae. (II, Cor. I, 12.) Mihi autem pro minimo est ut a vobis judicer aut ab humano die: qui autem judicat me, Dominus est. (I, Cor., IV, 3.)

PART II.

MEDITATIONS FOR THOSE TO BE ORDAINED TO TONSURE.

SECTION I.

THE PRIESTLY VOCATION.

MEDITATION I.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Adore the Son of God made man, as the Founder and Supporter of our Holy Church: "*Ipse fundavit eam Altissimus*" Ps. LXXX, 5. It is the God man, *Solus Altissimus*, who gives to the Church her existence, her constitution and authority, her hierarchy and clergy, everything in fact that is of her essence and foundation: *Aedificavit sibi domum; excidit columnas septem, immolavit victimas, et proposuit mensam.* Prov. IX, 1. This

sacred Edifice, this living temple which the Divine wisdom Itself has constructed, where the sacrifice of immolation never ceases, where the Table is always prepared, is indeed no other than our holy Catholic Church. The faithful thereof form as it were the arched roof and walls. The clergy with its sevenfold order established in view of the Divine Sacrifice, are as the seven columns of the edifice. Thank our Savior for the place among them which He in His great love has deigned to give you; acknowledge your utter inability to merit such a vocation; then beg the grace to appreciate this signal favor and to worthily correspond to it.

Second Point. Consider how honorable and excellent in the eyes of faith is the ecclesiastical state, the ministry of the Church: *"Intuemini quantus sit hic."* Hebr. VI. 1.

1. By reason of its *origin*. The author of the clerical state is Jesus Christ Himself: He has deigned to inaugurate it in the persons of His apostles and certain of His disciples; *"Ipse fecit nos regnum et sacerdotes,"* Apoc., I, 6. It is not, then, a mere human institution, a conventional dignity, nor yet a natural result of laws imposed on our nature by the Creator. Rather is it by decree of the positive

and sovereign will of the God Man. *"Non ab hominibus neque per hominem sed per Jesum Christum et Deum Patrem."* Gal. I, 1. Consequently its powers are as much of divine right as is its very existence. Its prerogatives are not dependent upon the good pleasure or authority of men, and though attempts be made to destroy or restrain them, they still will subsist, like the Church, unchanging and unchanged, even to the end of time.

2. By reason of its *end* and the *functions* it exercises. What end could be more glorious than that for which the clerical order has been instituted, and what functions more excellent than those which it discharges? Its purpose is to honor God and to sanctify the souls of men through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. It aspires to and seeks no other end than this, *"ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii in ædificationem corporis Christi.* Eph. IV, 11. The means thereto are the supernatural and divine powers which the Saviour has communicated to them for the continuance of His work. By the spirit which he imparts, as by the function he fulfils or the effects he works, every ecclesiastic is, by a special title and in a degree proportionate to the dignity of his Order, another

Jesus Christ, a veritable representative of the Supreme Pontiff, *alter Christus.*

3. By reason of the *rank* the clergy holds and the *ministry* he exercises. Placed by Our Lord at the head of His Church, the clergy acts the part of an indispensable intermediary between the faithful and God; the clergy really fill the place of a mediator. Through ecclesiastics Christians acquit themselves of the greater part of their duties toward the divine Majesty; through their hands the faithful offer to Heaven the adorable victim: through their lips the people express their praises, their thanksgivings, their supplications. On the other hand it is through these ministers that God bestows upon the faithful His most precious gifts, that He manifests His will to them, that He confers on them His sacraments, that He enables them to participate in the fruit of His holy mysteries. The clergy, therefore, are by turns the organ of God in His Church and the interpreter of the Church to God: "*Veluti angeli Jacob, ascendentes ut videant faciem Patris, descendentes ut provideant nobis.*" S. Bern. Thus we can understand the titles of "ecclesiastics" and "men of God" with which the ministers of the Church are honored.

Third Point. Recall the words uttered by Our Lord concerning His Precursor: *Major inter natos mulierum propheta Joanne Baptista nemo est: qui autem minor est in regno Dei, major est illo,* Luke, VII, 28. Not one among the prophets had received from Heaven a more sublime vocation than he: and yet, he that holds the lowest rank in the kingdom I am about to establish, will be greater than he, having to fulfill a more glorious ministry. *Amen dico vobis; qui minor est in regno coelorum major est illo.* Matth., XI, 11. Know, then, that this word is realized in you, and that, low as is your rank among the ministers of the Church, you are, nevertheless, in the sight of Heaven, higher in dignity than the patriarchs and prophets. Meditate well upon the honor done you and the mercy which you have obtained. The more esteem you have for your holy state the less will you be tempted to make of it a subject of vanity; the more fully will you appreciate your obligations, rendering acknowledgment to our Saviour and corresponding heartily to His designs.

Si invenires calicem aureum in terra, donares illum Ecclesiæ Dei. Accepisti a Deo ingenium

spiritualiter aureum: id ergo ejusdem offer Ecclesiæ. S. Aug. *Epist., XXXIX., ad Licent.*

Read the Psalm "*Domini est terra*" (Ps. 21) which is chanted at the ordination of clerics.

MEDITATION II.

THE HOLINESS OF THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Adore the Son of God made man, who is at once the Pontiff par excellence and the unique model of all virtues. "*Talis decebat ut nobis esset Pontifex,*" says the Apostle, "*sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus et excelsior coelis factus,*" Hebr., VII, 26. These virtues were necessary in order to make of Him the perfect Priest, and it is incumbent upon us to partake of His sanctity in proportion as we share in His priesthood. Thus St. Ambrose, reflecting upon this obligation, adds, in the name of the clergy: "*Sequimur, ut possumus, sacerdotes.*" "We strive, as far as our weakness will permit, to follow in His footsteps and to imitate His example." Ask of our Lord the grace to enter into these sentiments and to be able always to give this testimony of yourself.

Second Point. Consider how truly and unequivocally clerics are under the obligation of leading a holy life.

1. All *authorities* so declare. First, even the people of the world have a voice in this matter, and they expect that ecclesiastics be not only better than themselves, but quite irreproachable, even. You know how intolerant the men of the world are of minor faults in the clergy: you know, too, how even slight shortcomings in an ecclesiastic are often a source of scandal. Secondly, it is well to realize also that even if the pious faithful are more reserved and less willing to censure, they are not less aware of the obligations of our state nor less cognizant of our failures therein. Truly, nothing is more painful to them than to see in a clergyman the same faults and imperfections as are to be found in ordinary individuals; and nothing humiliates these good souls more: *"Quomodo enim observari potest a populo, qui nihil habet secretum a populo, dispar a multitudine?"* says St. Ambrose. Thirdly, it would be superfluous to give the doctrine of the Scriptures or to quote the lofty and noble sentiments of the Church's holy ones on this matter of clerical holiness of life. We realize that each text of Scrip-

ture, or each declaration of a saint would be but another earnest and energetic utterance; each calculated to strengthen our convictions and enliven our zeal.

2. There is every conceivable motive for clerical holiness, whether we consider our *functions* towards God, or our *ministry* to the faithful.

First. *Towards God.* How, think you, can one merit to live near Him, how render Him fitting homage or offer Him pleasing worship; how, above all, perform becomingly the holy mysteries if one strives not to lead a pure life, if one is not holy at least in desire and aspiration? *"Hoc est quod locutus est Dominus: Sanctificabor in iis qui appropinquant mihi, et in conspectu omnis populi glorificabor.* Levit., X, 3. *Quemcumque Dominus elegerit, erit sanctus.* Num., XVI, 7.

Secondly. In regard to *the faithful.* What graces will one be able to obtain from heaven for them if one has nothing in him that is meritorious—*"Non placat qui non placet."* S. Bern. Can one bring other souls to perfection without giving them an example? How can we be assured of the faithful's confidence if our conduct is not so dignified and becoming as to correspond with the pure

doctrine we preach? Will the people honor our ministry if we do not command their respect by an honest regard for our principles, by the true nobility of our sentiments, as well as by the sincerity and solidity of our virtue: "*Mundari prius oportet, deinde mundare; lux fieri et postea illuminare; sanctificari et postea sanctificare; ad Deum appropinquare et ita demum cæteros ad eum attrahere.*" St. Greg. Naz.

THIRD POINT. Have you the sentiments of esteem for the clerical state and the priesthood which you ought to have? Are you honestly and thoroughly convinced that by entering this state you assume the obligation of living a holy life and of seeking your sanctification daily more and more. Nothing is of more importance to you at present than that you be firmly convinced of this: nothing does the Church strive for more than to impress this on her ministers. "*Moneant Episcopi suos clericos, in quocumque ordine fuerint,*" says the Council of Trent, "*ut in conversatione, sermone, scientia, Dei populo præeant, memores ejus quod scriptum est: Sancti estote quoniam ego sanctus sum.*" In fact, it is the mind that guides the heart; and convictions that shape our life. If you have

that esteem for the priesthood which holy priests have ever cherished, you shall not be lacking in proper dispositions: you will spare no effort to bring to it a worthy preparation, and you will warrant the hope of a fruitful ministry. Be animated with these sentiments, then, and let this the first step in your clerical career be taken with that fervor and pure disinterestedness which you desire to have at the last of your ordinations.

It should be your pleasure—as your duty, to read the works of esteemed writers on the clerical life and the sacred Orders, such as Olier, John of Avila, Molina, St. Liguori, etc. *"Lege quod ordini quod professioni tuae conveniat, quod vanitates et insanias falsas procul a cordis tui affectione releget."* Pet. Bles.

MEDITATION III.

THE CLERICAL STATE — ITS ADVANTAGES.

First Point. Hearken to the Son of God as He gives assurance to His Church that every sacrifice made for love of Him will, even here in this life be rewarded an hundredfold. The circumstance is remarkable. The disciples have just

witnessed the heavy-hearted leave-taking of the rich young man who, though good, was yet lacking in generosity and could not bring himself to make the sacrifice of his fortune in order to become of the number of those who followed the Savior; and they have just heard the Divine Master pronounce the maxim, "It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Thereupon Peter approaches and in the name of the Apostles says to Him,' "Master, you know that we have been more docile and trustful. Though we were not rich we have yet left all we had to follow You. What then may we look for in recompense from you?" "Amen, in truth, replied the Savior, never will anyone repent of what he may do for My sake. Has anyone sacrificed all that he held most dear, his father, his mother, his sisters, wife, or fortune, and has done so for My sake, he will receive an hundredfold return in this life over and above and the assurance of eternal happiness in the next." "*Centuplum accipiet nunc, in tempore hoc, et in futuro vitam aeternam.*" Make, then, an act of faith in this promise which is recorded by three evangelists. It was given for all times and for all Christians. Be assured that there can be no failure

in your regard, as it has never yet failed any who have made ventures upon it.

Second Point. See, if Our Lord has not thus recompensed His ministers; if the lives they have consecrated to Him are not an hundred times more noble, more holy, aye, even more happy than if they had been spent in the world.

1. *More noble.* What is it that gives to a life nobility and distinction? What but the eminence of the functions it fulfills, the greatness of the powers it exercises, the loftiness of purpose for which it strives, no less than the importance of the results which it attains. But, in any of these respects, is there any lot in life comparable to that of the minister of God? The priest who lives as a priest exercises in the Church the very functions of the Savior Himself: "*Pro Christo legatione fungitur.*" II Cor., V, 2. His purpose, his work, his powers are those of the Man God. His interests are not those of time but of eternity. Nor does he work for himself, nor for a fortune, nor yet for a reputation; he labors for God, to promote His Glory, and to establish His reign in all hearts: "*In his constituitur quae sunt ad Deum.*" Heb. VI, 1. If he also occupies himself with men and

their affairs it is because he sees in them children of God and because he has the desire and the power to elevate them, by opening their eyes to the lights that shine from the world beyond, by helping them to grow in the grace of God and by fitting them for the enjoyment of God in His glory. Such is the life of the priest: such will be the life of the cleric. It is the life of Jesus Christ; He that is the very Son of God. Does it yield in nobility, in glorious worth to that of any prince or monarch of the world?

2. *More holy.* This goes without saying. It is no exaggeration to say that the tonsured ecclesiastic receives by reason of his calling an hundred times more grace than the ordinary faithful. It comes in consequence of his destined place in the Church and of the influence he ought to exercise. God wills that the cleric hold in the eyes of many souls an exalted position—a chief, a pastor, a guide, and a model, too; and moreover, that, for the most part, God wills that the graces these faithful need for their sanctification should come to them through the cleric; but how can he transmit them unless God has abundantly provided him with them. Reflect on these things: the source of grace will be your

ministry. All your life will be passed in the presence of God, within the shadow of the altar, amidst its holy mysteries; everything will speak to you of holiness; everything will recall your obligation of being holy; and everything will aid you in becoming so. And, though you had nothing more than the faithful except the privilege and power of celebrating every day the divine sacrifice, of bringing down upon the altar, of immolating and of receiving each morning the sacred Body and Blood of the Savior, would not this in itself be, if you so wish, a sufficient guarantee of your eternal welfare? How can one live thus with God and not for God? And yet, this, as you know, is but one of your many and holy functions. You will minister sacraments; offer up prayers without number; and by sermon and conversation exhort others no less than yourself to a Christian life. It must, then, be evident that, as far as graces and means of sanctification are concerned, there can be and is no comparison between the life of the cleric and of the man of the world. The layman is ignorant in many things pertaining to faith, rarely in close union with God, too often occupied with profane thoughts and dangerous concerns.

3. *More happy.* It is not here a question of such happiness as worldlings enjoy; the satisfaction given to the three forms of concupiscence, pride, cupidity, and sensuality, nor is it a matter of temporal things, externals, pleasure, honor, or wealth. But rather of true, solid happiness, content of heart, that internal and real peace which the Savior promised to His loved ones, and which the world can neither give nor take from them; the happiness which is made up of those spiritual joys and consolations which are the gift of the Holy Spirit and the indication of His presence; consolations deeper and more heartfelt than all that the world affords, which make us not only to forget, but count as nothing what the world holds dear. This is the happiness of God, says St. Augustine, and you will enjoy it in so far as you are attached to God and have a taste for the things of God: "*Est enim vita beata gaudere in te, de te, propter te.*" But to whom is it given more or better to know and experience this happiness of God than to His minister? He has taken God for his portion, renouncing everything, that he may serve Him only and love Him with all his heart. Not a fervent soul but, as it beholds the priest in

the exercise of his functions at the altar, is moved with holy envy, and would give of his life with a ready heart, weeks, aye months, for one consecrated day of the priest in the exercise of the holy ministry? "*Dies una super millia*!" Psalm, LXXX, 11.

Third Point. If it is a crime and a misfortune to enter the clerical state without a vocation, be equally assured that it is an inestimable grace to be called thereto by the Spirit of God, and to have as one's portion in this life, Him who will be our happiness in the next. Thank Him as best you can for goodness He has shown you in particular, by giving you such a destiny. Say with the Psalmist, "*Mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est. Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris. Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum.*" Let these sentiments bring you to accomplish generously such sacrifices as your clerical state demands. May you become, day by day, more strongly and lovingly attached to your state, and more faithful in the performance of its duties.

Each time you recite the "*Magnificat,*" reflect upon the acknowledgement made thus by the Most Blessed Virgin for the dignity to which she was raised, and humbly join your thanksgiving with hers.

MEDITATION IV.

THE NECESSITY OF A VOCATION FOR THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Adore the Word Incarnate called by the Heavenly Father to the priestly office and receiving from Him the Supreme Pontificate, as He also received from Him everything, in so far as He is man. *"Non semetipsum clarificavit ut Pontifex fieret, sed qui locutus est ad eum: Tu es sacerdos in æternum."* Hebr. V, 5. To enter into the priesthood on his own initiative, independently of the will of God, is even in the Saviour Himself as man, an act quite inconceivable. Such an act would not only be wrong but altogether vain; for no one, without the ordinance of the divine Majesty, can exercise His authority or act in His name; nor can anyone, of his own will, impose himself upon the Church, even to help in the discharge of the obligations laid upon her.

Venerate the more, then, the priestly dignity in Our Lord, the only dignity He exercised here on earth, and ask of Him the grace to have always for the priesthood that respect and reverence which it deserves.

Second Point. For the good of the Church and the security of souls, God wishes that the character and powers of the priesthood be conferred on all those who receive ordination; but, He permits only those to receive ordination whom He has chosen and called thereto. Consider, then, how manifest is the necessity of being so called.

1. *Scripture* establishes it expressly. No man, It says, has a right to this honor: "*Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem.*" Hebr. V. And, in support of this assertion the sacred writer quotes unquestionable examples; the vocation of the Savior Himself, of Aarôn, of the Twelve Apostles, the substitution of Matthias for Judas, the choosing of the first deacons. "*Ostende quem elegeris,*" the Apostles, nay, the Son of God, even after His return to Heaven. Acts I, 24. It is always in His name, according to His presumed will, that ministers of the Church are chosen. Never has a worthy priest been seen to designate himself, to impose himself upon the Church, or to claim the priesthood as his right.

2. *The Church* is most insistent upon this in the conferring of orders. It is because of this necessity of a vocation that the ordinandi ought to await the

invitation from the bishop before presenting themselves for orders; and also, on the day of ordination, instead of vesting themselves with the insignia of their office, they present themselves before the bishop to receive all these at his hands; and finally, the ceremony begins only after a solemn and nominal appeal to all those who are to take part therein. The significance of the rites is obvious. Moreover, not a single ordination is given without the necessity of a vocation therefor being recalled by the Pontiff and impressed upon the ordinands in the most formal manner.

3. *Reason* itself puts the matter beyond all cavil or doubt. For if there be any evident truths are not these such? First. That all states in life are not suitable to all men; that God who is Allwise destines each man for the profession for which he is best fitted, and no one can, without temerity, evade that calling which offers to him the greatest facility for the utilization of his talents and for the attainment of his end. Secondly. That, having placed over all His works a Church which has need of worthy ministers, the Saviour has seen to it that She can always have them; and that, as He desires His priesthood to be exercised by all those who are

capable of it and, in some sense, render themselves worthy, so He intends that all who are unworthy or incapable shall have no share in it: *"Ipse dedit quosdam quidem apostolos, quosdam autem evangelistas, alios autem pastores et doctores ad consummationem sanctorum."* Eph. IV. *"Numquid omnes apostoli? Numquid omnes pastores? Numquid omnes virtutes?"* I Cor., XI. Thirdly. That Our Lord, willing the salvation and perfection of all, desires that we each embrace the state wherein we shall have most assurance of our own sanctification and of contributing to the sanctification of others, and that He must forbid entrance to any state to those of us who would be to our neighbor or to ourselves a cause of eternal perdition therein. These truths are so obvious and so convincing, that no one has ever attempted to contest, in theory, the necessity of a vocation for the ecclesiastical state.

THIRD POINT. If you have sufficient assurance of your vocation to the priesthood, fail not in your acknowledgments to God, and attest your gratitude by doing all in your power to profit by His graces and to correspond with His designs: *"Fidelis est qui vocavit vos, qui etiam faciet."* I Thess, V, 24. *"Quem elegerit, germinabit virga ejus."* Num.,

XVII, 5. While there is yet time for further reflection and self examination, promise Him that you will take no step rashly, that you will seek His will only, that you will employ all the best means to discover it and to accomplish it: "*Ut probes quæ sit voluntas Dei bona et bene placens et perfecta.*" Rom., XII, 2.

Let no day pass without your having offered a prayer to the Blessed Virgin for the grace to correspond with your vocation. "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!*" "Happy are the chosen ones of the Lord; those who enter His sanctuary." Matt., XXIII, 39.

MEDITATION V.

THE MISFORTUNE OF AN ECCLESIASTIC WITHOUT A VOCATION.

First Point. Recall with what rigor and severity God in olden times punished the ambitious Israelites who dared to contest the pontificate of the descendants of Aaron and assumed to themselves the functions of the priesthood. They went so far as to burn before the Tabernacle their sacrilegious incense, and the Lord thereupon manifested

His just indignation in the sight of His people: "*Apparuit cunctis gloria Domini.*" Num., XVI, 19. The earth yawned beneath the feet of the guilty wretches; they were enveloped by angry flames, and, still living, they were hurled into hell: "*Dirupta est terra sub pedibus eorum: et aperiens os suum devoravit illos et descenderunt vivi in infernum.*" Num., XVI, 31–33. This is certainly an example and a lesson for us: "*Haec scripta sunt ad correptionem nostram, in quos fines saeculorum devenerunt.*" I Cor., X, 11. How many unthinking, ambitious and self-seeking ecclesiastics could well have profited by this! Pray Our Lord that you may never merit such a chastisement.

Second Point. Consider how criminal and wretched it would be for any one to force open the gates of the sanctuary, and intrude uninvited into the ranks of the clergy.

1. It would be a larceny and a sacrilege.

A larceny. To arrogate to one's self, unbidden and contrary to the will of God, the priesthood and the holy ministry, is simply to take what is not one's own, but which belongs to another. "I am the door," says the Savior. "He to whom I do not open the sheepfold, who enters by another way,

the same is a thief and a robber." *"Ille fur est et latro."* John, X, 1. He steals, then, and usurps.

A sacrilege. For the object of this larceny is a sacred thing, a thing most august and holy. Furthermore what use does he intend to make of this usurped ministry? Instead of exercising it for God, for his own increase in grace and virtue, he devotes it to most unworthy selfish interests; to pamper his vanity, to feed his ambition, or to satisfy his cupidity; aye, he abuses it to the detriment and eternal death of souls: *Fur non venit, nisi ut furetur et mactet et perdat.* John, X, 10.

2. But what is more terrible to contemplate is the cold fact that the evil is *most difficult to remedy,* and its consequences quite as difficult to arrest. So long as one is not engaged irrevocably, one has only to retrace his steps and take up another career: *"Licet pro arbitrio ad saecularia vota transire."* Pontif. A little conscience and courage suffice for that. But once the engagement of the subdiaconate has been contracted, or, more than that, when the character of the priesthood has been received, it is quite a different matter. There is now no question of choosing another state in life, of taking up another and new career. Rather,

it is a question of breaking, shattering forever a solemn engagement; of foregoing all its advantages while remaining under all its obligations. True, all is possible still with grace; but this requires great effort and generous constancy. And, when there has been such weakness at the very entrance into sacred Orders, it is greatly to be feared that there will not be to the end, that energy and firmness which is required almost absolutely.

Third Point. Fear, above all things, to enter the clerical state without a vocation; to be in the clergy as a tare in the field of the husbandman, "*ad comburendum.*" Matt., XIII, 30. "*Omnis plantatio quam non plantavit Pater meus coelestis eradicabitur,*" says Our Lord. Matt., XV, 13. What is to be gained by living awhile in the House of the Lord here on earth, if one is to be excluded from His Kingdom for all eternity! "*Esset sine dubio melius salvari in humilori gradu populi, quam in cleri sublimitate et deterius vivere et districtius judicari.*" S. Bernard. But, rest assured that this misfortune will not befall you, if you sincerely will to avoid it and honestly seek the will of God. Seek and you will find; ask and you will receive; knock at the "Door" and it will be

opened unto you. Our Savior will redeem His promises, He will bless your good intention and will confirm you in your holy purposes. "*Fidelis est qui promisit. Non enim injustus Deus ut obliviscatur dilectionis quam ostendistis, qui ministrastis sanctis et ministratis.*" Hebr., X, 23, VI, 10.

Read chapter XVI of the Book of Numbers. "*Quod pertulerunt superbi illi Levitae, hoc patientur quicumque se in episcopatus aut presbyteratus aut diaconatus officium impudenter conantur ingerere; quomodo combusti sunt illi in corpore, sic isti exurentur in corde.*" S. Aug., Serm. XXX, 1, Append.

MEDITATION VI.

PRAYER NECESSARY TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD.

First Point. In the Acts of the Apostles you will find a striking example of the efficacy of prayer in the spiritual life and in the direction of souls. Cornelius, the centurion, was in doubt as to the road which would lead him to salvation and to God; unceasing prayer was his resort. Peter, the head of the Church, was much perplexed as to how he should deal with the Gentiles; in prayer also, he

sought for light. God heard and enlightened both. Cornelius understood that he must present himself to Peter for instruction, and Peter learned that Heaven willed that he should give the instruction. Thank the Holy Spirit of God for the lesson herein furnished us, and determine to profit by it.

Second Point. Consider the obligation you are under of praying for true knowledge of your vocation; for vocation is based on your particular needs and on the will of God.

1. To know your vocation and to embrace it, you are in absolute *need* of three graces. First. That of finding out the good pleasure of God, rightly, simply and exclusively, with the sincerity and generosity of St. Paul who cried out, after his conversion: "*Domine quid me vis facere?*" Secondly. The grace of knowing yourself such as you are, with all your dispositions, habits, tastes, qualities, defects, aversions, fears and weaknesses, and of making yourself known to your director without disguise, without reticence, artifice, or any unworthy purpose. Lastly, the grace to accept with docility the decision of your director and to conform to it as to the will of God Himself. Graces, each of which is most precious and important,

since upon them your sanctification depends, and with them your eternal salvation is most vitally concerned.

2. To obtain these graces one *must* pray. You know what promises Our Savior made to those who pray. "Ask and you shall receive—for everyone that asketh receiveth." Matt. VII, 7, 8. These promises are general and admit of no exception And the fruit of prayer is all the more assured since our salvation is so nearly concerned in its attainment. "If a child ask for bread," says Our Lord, "what father could be so unnatural as to reach him a stone?" How then can you doubt that your heavenly Father listens to those who ask of Him and gives His spirit to those who seek it. "*Quanto magis Pater vester de coelo spiritum bonum dabit petentibus se!*" Luke, XI, 13.

"But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men abundantly, and it shall be given to him." St. James, I, 5.

Of course, confidence is necessary.

Could anyone, then, desire words more explicit or promises more certain and unqualified? Yet, he loses all these guarantees who neglects prayer, whether because he does not believe that light from

Heaven is necessary or because he has taken his resolution once and for all and is unwilling to retract in any case. When Our Lord said, "Ask and you shall receive," He gave us to understand that we are to hope for nothing, but what we ask.

Third Point. Therefore, resolve to pray often and to pray with fervor for light as to your vocation. And if you do pray, do it in the same spirit as St. Paul. *"Domine quid me vis facere?"* Do you really desire to know God's will in your regard and what will be most acceptable to Him on your part? Do you, in seeking to know His good pleasure, strive to conform to it? Or, if your vocation is sufficiently clear, do you frequently beg of Heaven the grace to correspond with it? *"Domine doce me facere voluntatem tuam."* Ps. CXL, II, 10. It is one thing to know which road to follow, but quite another to follow it to the end: *"Nescitis quod ii qui in stadio currunt omnes quidem currunt, sed unus accipit bravium? Sic currite ut compehendatis."* I Cor., IX., 24.

Read attentively the pious works of Saint Liguori on vocation and prayer. "He who prays much, receives much, and is sanctified thereby," says the

holy doctor: and he who is little given to prayer receives accordingly, and exposes himself incautiously: while he who prays not at all, strays along the edge of an awful abyss, awaiting only to make one misstep and then falls headlong down.

MEDITATION VII.

THE QUESTION OF VOCATION TO BE DECIDED BY ONE'S DIRECTOR.

First Point. Admire the wisdom of God in the ordinary guidance of souls. For, lest they be exposed to illusion, and in order to guard against the working of pride, and to insure respect for authority, He wishes that all seek counsel; and to those He deigns to grant the greatest graces who show themselves most docile. St. Augustine proposes to us the example of St. Paul and the centurion, Cornelius. Heaven listened to the prayers of each and answered directly, bidding one to have recourse to Ananias, the other to Peter, there to learn the will of Heaven. Return thanks to the Divine Master, who desires to lead you on by a similar way, and beg of Him the disposition necessary to follow it.

Second Point. Consider the reasons which unfit and disqualify you as arbiter in the matter of your own vocation.

First, you have not sufficient *light*. To decide with assurance and security such a question, it does not suffice merely to know yourself, but it is necessary that you understand well all that pertains to the ecclesiastical state and the holy ministry; it is necessary also to know what each demands as to virtue, intelligence and justice, and to appreciate fully the obligations imposed, the dangers incurred, and the help to be received. But these things are known only through experience or close observation. To imagine that you can realize and appreciate all these at a glance is simply to delude yourself—nay, even to expose yourself to great mistakes: "*Ne sine ductore ingrediaris viam quam nunquam ingressus es.*" St. Jerome.

Second. Your *partiality* is to be feared. When a judge has some interest in a case, or when, having not yet examined the case, he shows certain preferences, one fears for justice, because of the conviction that reason is often the dupe of interest or affection, and because it is difficult not to take inclinations for reasons. But are you not in just such

a position as regards your vocation? Are you without any interested motive, any prejudice, any influence, and inclined by no human consideration to one side or the other?

Have you not previously formed certain projects, or conceived certain hopes; or even risked certain bearings? Is it not wise, at least, to make sure on these points and spare yourself all anxiety?

Third. You cannot count too much on light from Heaven.

If there is one question on which it is important that God should enlighten you, it is certainly that which is to decide your life and to have the chiefest influence on the working out of your salvation. But, will, or should God grant you that grace if you neglect to take the best means of meriting it? What reason have you to believe that He will manifest His will to you, if you are unwilling to seek instruction of those whom He has commissioned to guide you, and whose position, moreover, renders them at the same time more competent and more disinterested than you? "*Non sibi complacet Deus in arroganter ordinatis,*" says St. Ephrem.

Third Point. Resolve in all things to avoid presumption, rashness and obstinacy: "*Fili, sine*

consilio nihil facias," says the Sage, *"et post factum non pœnitebit."* Eccl., XXXII, 24. Love to consult those whom Providence has given you for your enlightenment and guidance. Show deference to their opinions and willingly forego your own. As regards your vocation, particularly, be prudent and decide nothing of yourself: *"Custodi pedem tuum ingrediens domum Dei."* Eccli., IV, 17. Of all those who have made a mistake in this matter, there is not one but ought to impute his error to his own presumption, to rash confidence in his own judgment. Spare yourself their perils and their regrets. You will do well to read the seventh treatise of Rodriguez: "On fidelity in revealing one's inmost conscience;" particularly the tenth chapter, on these words *"effunde sicut aquam cor tuum."* Thren., II, 19.

MEDITATION VIII.

ATTRACTION FOR THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Our Lord calls all men to Christianity and a certain number to the priesthood and the holy ministry; but He constrains no one: *"Cum reverentia disponit nos."* Sap., XII, 18.

His interests, as well as our own, demand that in serving Him we follow the inclinations of our heart. Therefore it is not only to the intellect, but to the will of each that He addresses the words: "If anyone will come after Me." Luke, IX, 23. "Whosoever wishes to become my disciple, to follow Me, to be my minister": to those who have already taken the first step, He recommends still further reflection. Luke, XIV, 28. Before making a final engagement He enquires anew of their resolution; "*Numquid et vos vultis abire*? And will you also go away?" John, VI, 67. Thank God for the wisdom of His ways, and learn from these instances that, to enter without imprudence into the clerical state, one must needs have a holy esteem for it and must embrace the charge with a great love.

Second Point. Consider what should be the qualities of an attraction to the clerical state and functions: It should be decided, unmistakably so: it should be unreserved and unqualified: it should be strong enough to overcome, to resist all difficulties.

1. Were one to become a cleric without any inclination to the life, or even hesitatingly and with divided affection, or worse still, were one to

receive sacred Orders with a kind of regret, with a secret preference for some other state, one would certainly do wrong, grievously so, to promise himself either happiness or perfection therein. Far from being happy in the priesthood, such a one would find his position little short of misery. He would suffer as a member out of place, sadly so, and his sacrifices, too, would be without profit or merit. For how, think you, can God bless sacrifices induced by going counter to His designs, when one might have endured them generously for love of Him?

2. Had one the taste for the pleasures of clerical life, but not for its obligations, or found that he possessed a liking for certain virtues and functions to the exclusion of others, it is clear that such a one has no reason to believe that he is called to the priesthood. For, far from being a guarantee of fidelity and perseverance in the accomplishment of its duties, this one-sided attraction would be, rather, a reason for well-grounded apprehension that a part of the work of the ministry would be neglected, either in seeking agreeable diversions, or in devoting oneself to such functions as are flattering to nature and to which one is exclusively drawn.

3. Finally, though one have the taste and attraction for all clerical duties and functions, if that taste and attraction be not strong and dominant, if they do not give promise of constancy, if they do not stand the test of time and trial and difficulty, then the possessor has no sufficient warrant for entering, with any degree of security, into the state which demands sacrifice after sacrifice, even unto the day of death: "*Ante, juxta consilium Salvatoris, sedulo debueras aestimasse opus, metiri vires, ponderasse sapientiam, sumptus computasse virtutum.*" S. Bern.

Third Point. Realize well that you are under grave obligation to examine yourself before God and to have an understanding with your director on these three points:

First. Would you not readily and gladly enter upon some other career, were it open to you?

Secondly. What are those things which are most pleasing and attractive to you in the ordinary life of a priest, what you find to be least so, or which, perhaps, dismay you?

Thirdly. Since what period in your life, and how constantly have you felt an attraction to

the priesthood? Promise to Our Lord that you will make this examination seriously and with impartiality. Ask the help of His grace.

Read Psalm LXXXIII, and the commentary thereon by Fr. Olier in his "*Traité des Saints Ordres* I, 2. See if these sentiments therein expressed have any place in your heart.

MEDITATION IX.

THE INTENTION WITH WHICH ONE SHOULD ENTER THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Adore the Divine Master exhorting you, by word as well as by His example, to sanctify your life by a pure and right intention: "*Ingrediens mundum dicit: Ecce venio ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam.*" Hebr., X, 5. And later,—"*Descendi de coelo, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed ejus qui misit me.*" Joan., VI, 38. Here, then, is what He has done, and here is the testimony He gives. "It is your intention that gives to your works their righteousness and their worth. Take care, then, that nothing change or mar them." "*Lucerna corporis tui est oculus tuus—vide ergo ne lumen quod in te est tenebrae*

sint." Matth., VI, 22-23. This maxim has a meaning for all Christians, but the Council of Trent makes special application of it to those about to receive Tonsure and to enter the ecclesiastical state: *"Prima tonsura non initientur, de quibus probabilis non sit ut Deo fideliter cultum praestent hoc vitae genus elegisse."* Sess., XXII. Ask of Our Lord the grace to profit by this advice in the choice of a state in life.

Second Point. Consider of what import it is to have no other intention, in becoming a cleric, than that of consecrating oneself to the service of God and of His Church.

1. This intention is a *mark of vocation.* In fact if you really have no other intention; if your views are as they should be; pure, holy and supernatural, you may well believe that your purposes are blessed by Heaven. "That which comes from the flesh is flesh, and that which nature suggests ends with nature, and never rises above nature." John, III. Hence if your designs are inspired by Heaven, they will persist and, if nothing seriously opposes them, find their way to execution. But if your motives are mixed with some alloy, if you look to your own interests as well as to those of

God, there is certainly room for belief that nature has had some part in forming your purpose and, perhaps, there is reason to fear lest your determination may be something of an illusion, if not an outright mistake. "*Qui per clericatus officium aliud quaerit quam Deum, nec a Deo electus est, nec Deus eligit.*" Yvo Carnut.

2. The good intention is what constitutes the *worth of your sacrifice.* If one comes to God with a right intention, the gift which he has to offer, the gift of his person, is very meritorious in His sight, and the sacrifice will bring down great graces from Heaven and will repair great faults of the past: "*Illi accipient benedictionem a Domino et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo, quia haec est generatio quaerentium Dominum.*" Pontifical. But, if one proposes to himself the gaining of wordly advantages and natural satisfactions, the offering thus made loses in value according as the intention is wanting in purity. "*Non Abel ex muneribus sed ex Abel munera oblata Deo placuerunt,*" says Gregory the Great Furthermore, it can well be that, instead of meriting the blessing of God, one would, by a poor intention, render himself culpable in God's sight and draw down upon himself the indignation

and chastisement of Heaven. *"Qui enim gloriam propriam quaerit gratiae Dei rapinam facit et ideo non accipit benedictionem sed maledictionem."* St. Anselm.

3. A good intention is an *augury of a good ministry.* If one enters upon clerical life with a truly upright intention, he can well hope to fulfill its functions in the right spirit, holily and well, and that he will heap up new merits day by day. *"Si delibatio sancta est, et massa; et si radix sancta, et rami."* Rom., XI, 16. On the contrary, if one takes this step with selfish, imperfect, and interested motives, why should he not fear that instead of rectifying and chastening them later, he will become, day by day, more self-centered, more interested, more grovelling and worldly? St. Bernard says, *"Si altiorem quam meliorem esse delectat, non praemium, sed praecipitium expectemus. Impossibile est ut ex amara radice ambitionis, suavis fructus prodeat caritatis."*

THIRD POINT. *"Si Dominum quaeritis, Dominum quaerite."* Isaias, XXI, 12. Ask of Our Lord the grace to think always upon the clerical state from the view point of faith, and to esteem in the priesthood only what tends to the honor and service of

God. Examine well what those things are that naturally attract you, and strive earnestly to detach your heart from the frivolous joys they afford and set your heart upon those more solid, lasting and precious things of which worldliness and self-seeking would only deprive you. In a word, spare yourself no pains, refuse God no sacrifice whatever, in order that the "*Dominus pars,*" if it be granted to you to pronounce these words, may be a truth on your lips, expressing the sincerest and inmost sentiments of your heart.

Read in St. Matthew, XX, 20–24, the story of the Sons of Zebedee asking of Our Lord the first places in His kingdom: this will bring home to you how natural it is for you—for any man to be self-seeking even in the service of God: "*Usitatus sermo: propter Deum; sed ubi vacue non dicitur, profundissimus sermo.*" St. Bernard.

SECTION II.

ORDINATION TO TONSURE.

MEDITATION X.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST ORDINATION.

First Point. Observe the conduct of the Divine Master with regard to those whom He had destined to become His co-workers. He did not merely call them to the faith, as He had done to the crowds to whom He preached; nor yet did He lay upon them, all at once, the burden of the ministry. He was content at first with merely attaching them to Himself as disciples, that thus, while they were receiving instruction, they might also put into practice what they learned and, day by day, become more adapted to the functions soon to devolve upon them. The first year, Jesus Himself preached in their presence; the second, He sent a certain number of them before Him to preach the Kingdom of God; but it was not until the third and last year, that He ap-

pointed the twelve Apostles, and only during the last days of His life did He communicate to them their principal powers. How fortunate and privileged were those holy disciples to thus make their novitiate under the very Son of God, in His society, and with His guidance and direction. And is it not a like favor that the Church now extends to you, by attaching you to her service, associating you with her ministers, through holy Tonsure?

Second Point. It is well that you should realize the importance of receiving this ordination with the best possible dispositions.

1. Because of the *graces* that attend upon it. For though it be neither an order nor a sacrament, there can be not the least doubt but that it brings to those who prepare worthily, abundant and precious graces. If it were otherwise, if the reception of Tonsure did but impose new obligations upon those who offer themselves, or, were its only effect to change what were counsels into precepts, how could we see in it anything but an added danger to our salvation, rather than a favor of Heaven; and would not prudence counsel us to avoid this danger by remaining as we are, in the ranks of the laity? But no; far from being a trap or pitfall to

generous hearts, Tonsure is a plentiful source of graces. God does not abandon those who become more truly His servants: "*Non subtrahit se ut cadant.*" S. Aug.

In placing them at the head of the body of the faithful, God gives them all the helpful graces they can desire, in order that they may the better honor their state and practice its characteristic virtues: "*Dat virtutem qui contulit dignitatem.*" St. Leo.

2. Because of the *influence* this first ordination cannot but have on those to follow. As the reception of Tonsure is the initial step, the beginning of a new career, so, the manner in which it is prepared for and received, truly becomes a presage of much significance. It is a well-received adage among men of the world, that "The beginning is an augury, for good or ill, of the end": "*Primum in unoquoque genere est mensura caeterorum.*" Your experience teaches you that, ordinarily, men do not end well who begin badly, and, when the first step in a career is a fall, it is greatly to be feared that the end will not be happily reached: "*Difficile est bono peragantur exitu quae malo sunt inchoata principio.*" St. Leo.

3. The first ordination should be prepared for earnestly because of the *offense* that would be offered to God by him who does not make a sincere offering of himself. No one would think of denying that he, who is not in the state of grace, has no right to present himself for Tonsure. It is generally recognized too, that anyone so presenting himself would be guilty of mortal sin. Nor will this opinion seem severe if one but consider well how incongruous it is for a man, who has broken off with God, as far as he can, and still perseveres in his graceless course, to come before God's holy altar with solemn protestations that he wishes Him for his portion and that he consecrates himself unreservedly to His service. "*Quis enim magis impius, an. profitens impietatem, an mentiens sanctitatem? Nonne is qui etiam mendacium addens, geminat impietatem?*" St. Bernard.

THIRD POINT. Neglect nothing that will help you to make as well and firmly as possible this first step in your clerical life. Be not content with looking merely to the essential requirements. Rather, endeavor to have all the merit it can bring you, and to gather all the fruit it affords. Make it, above all, with an eye to the future. When one

contemplates building a noble edifice, wisdom counsels that the foundation be solid. Tonsure is the foundation stone of the priestly life. Strive, then, with the best that is in you to be nothing lacking in the dispositions you shall bring to ordination, so that, instead of ever having to review your first approach to the altar with misgiving or disquietude, it may ever be to you a motive of confidence and a source of consolation: "*Si incipis, incipe perfecte.*" St. Bernard.

Read in the lives of worthy and saintly clerics of our own day, what they have thought of Holy Tonsure, the sentiments and dispositions with which they presented themselves for it, and the graces they reaped therefrom.

MEDITATION XI.

THE VIRTUE REQUIRED FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. The Savior declares that His ministers ought to be, and are the salt of the earth as well as the light of the world. Wherefore, account must be taken of the virtues of the subjects who offer themselves as well as of their talents.

Thus, Christ chose as His apostles the best among His disciples, as He had chosen as His disciples the most virtuous of those who believed in Him. We see, too, that of others who wished to follow Him, some He sent again to their homes because He found them wanting in the desired qualities, while others were tested and tried as to their faith and obedience. We may well be thankful to the Divine Master for having left this example of wisdom to His Church, and we must acknowledge that it is with good reason that the Church requires in a subject a certain measure of Christian perfection and merit before admitting him to holy Tonsure: "*Ne miles antequam tiro, ne prius magister sis quam discipulus.*" St. Jerome.

Second Point. What manner and degree of virtue does the Church demand?

The Pontifical specifies three dispositions:

1. *Purity of soul and an exemplary life.* This is the meaning of Psalm XXIII, which is chanted while the bishop vests the tonsured with the surplice: "*Quis ascendet in montem Domini aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?*" Who are to be thought worthy to ascend the holy mountain, to approach the temple built upon the summit of Sion and to

the high altar raised therein? Then comes the response inspired of the Holy Spirit; "*Innocens manibus et mundo corde.*" He that is without reproach before God and man, who is innocent in heart and innocent in his works; "*Purus in opere et sanctus in cogitatione:*" (St. Jerome) be it the grace of baptism preserved intact, or grace recovered through penance. Then the bishop and people join in prayer that God may preserve the tonsured in his innocence, precious beyond compare: "*ut eos sine macula in sempiternum custodias.*" Pontific.

2. *The spirit of detachment.* The tonsured makes profession of this when he pronounces, before the altar as the bishop cuts away portions of his hair, "*Dominus pars hereditatis meae et calicis mei.*" There is nothing ambiguous as to the meaning of these words, nor as to the significance of the ceremony. And yet, is it right and honorable that any one should make so solemn a profession of these sentiments, unless they have a place in his heart, unless he has resolved to forego selfish interests and worldliness? Pray, then, give up all attachments incompatible with your profession: "*Dimitte omnia et invenies omnia.*" Imit., III. And do it without

any reserve, as a thing done by halves. Trivial as this may seem to you, it will, nevertheless, impair the integrity of your sacrifice and deprive you of that liberty of heart promised to those who renounce all for the honor of God. "*Ex volucrum aucupio disce quae parva videntur minime contemnere. Contingit enim ut avis in laqueum incidens minima capiatur unguicula; et alarum vires franguntur ac debilitantur ob unguem vilem; et cum totus corpus sit extra laqueum, totum tamen retinetur.*" St. Ephrem.

3. *Love of God and zeal for His interests and those of His Church.* All the prayers offered for the tonsured either express or imply this: "*Qui ad deponendum comas capitum suorum pro ejus amore festinant. In ejus dilectione perpetuo manent. . . Et devote in ecclesia persistere et vitam percipere mereantur aeternam.*" Pontific. If one had other dispositions, if one consecrated himself to God with really little or no love for God, would he not be guilty of deception before the Church and, at the same time, give the lie to the assurances given by the bishop to Our Lord?

Third Point. You must realize that, in calling you to holy Tonsure, Almighty God makes of you

an especial object of His mercy and destines you to an uncommon degree of perfection. You may well thank Him for such a gracious disposition; the more, so when you contemplate the numerous graces that have been and are yours, and the merits you might now possess had you put them all to profit. At least ask pardon for having corresponded so poorly to His goodness towards you, and for your present inappreciativeness and shortcomings as well. Make up your mind now to work with an honest heart; to prepare well for ordination. Promise God that you will not present yourself before the bishop, unless with a sincere resolve to lead henceforth a life thoroughly in conformity with the holiness of your calling: *"Si vitae sanctitas non praecessit, saltem sequatur. Delicta juventutis delcat repentina correctio."* St. Bernard.

Make a careful meditation on Psalm XXIII, *"Domini est terra."* *"Ita age et vive ut clericus esse merearis, nec adolescentiam tuam ulla labe commacules, ut ad altare Christi, quasi de thalamo virgo procedas."* St. Jerome.

MEDITATION XII.

ON THE LIGHTED CANDLE WHICH THE TONSURED CARRIES.

First Point. Adore the Divine Master uttering His eulogy upon St. John the Baptist, and presenting His precursor to His Apostles as the model of a true minister of His Gospel. "*Erat lucerna ardens et lucens.*" Joan, V, 35. And, in truth, to be consumed for the glory of God and the good of souls, to enlighten minds with the light of faith, to warm hearts with fire of charity, is not this the mission of ecclesiastics among us? To testify that he accepts, with this understanding, the office offered him, the ordinand carries a lighted candle in his hand as he enters the sanctuary and approaches the bishop. Pray earnestly to Our Lord that you may enter into the spirit of this symbol, and may you not be wanting in the disposition it bespeaks.

Reflect now upon the three things you undertake by the engagement of Tonsure.

1. To *devote* your life, your time, your talents, and your energy to the service of God and to the spiritual concerns of your neighbor. The candle there burning upon the altar, consuming itself in

honor of Christ and His saints, is it not an holocaust, an impressive type of the most complete of sacrifices, wherein the victim entirely disappears devoured by the sacred fire? In offering to God your candle on the day of your tonsure, you thereby give token, in the presence of the faithful, that you wish to make an unqualified sacrifice of yourself for the greater glory of God. You signify a desire for unselfish devotion in the service of God and His Church. And, though you do not speak by mouth the words of Solomon, or of the Apostles, yet, with them, your heart utters the same expressive and solemn purpose, "*Domine, in simplicitate cordis mei laetus obtuli universa.*" I, Paral, XXIX, 12. "*Libentissime impendam et superimpendar ipse.*" II Cor., XII, 15.

2. To diffuse around you the spirit of faith and the *light* of salvation, to help, as far as is in your power, by your conduct and by your conversation, dissipate the ignorance and error which befog the minds of your fellow Christians. You have a right understanding of things; your standard of life is the only true one; and, it is for you, as a cleric, to enlighten others whose knowledge of the truth of our religion, of its precepts, its maxims and practices is crude

and ill defined. You are to do it by speaking as a man of faith—and by living accordingly. "*Vos estis lux mundi,*" are the words of Our Saviour to His first disciples. Matt., V, 14. The light of the world! That means you, if you are to be one of His worthy ministers. Your personal characteristics must be recognized as those of a man of faith, not of a worldling. You are to be a man of uncommon ideas; ideas found only in the Gospel maxims. You are to be impregnated with these if you are to influence others for their soul's good. Men do not realize how ignorant they are in this, the most important of matters, and it is of serious moment that ecclesiastics enlighten them by the practice of Christian perfection. Then they will recognize the way to Heaven. "*In medio nationis pravae et perversæ, lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo, verbum vitae continentes.* Phil., II, 15.

3. To keep and increase in the hearts of men, as best you may, the *fire* of charity and zeal for perfection. The Savior came to bring this flame to earth and His one desire is to see it spread afar, to be enkindled in all. Matt., XII, 40. In offering yourself as a minister to Him, you profess a willingness and desire to undertake this mission, to nourish

and guard that flame,—and, in your own heart first of all.

THIRD POINT. In that moment, soon to come, when you will have in your hand the lighted candle, or when you see the candles lighted upon the altar, think of them as a type of what you ought to be, "*lucerna ardens et lucens.*" To shine will serve to no purpose unless there be a burning too. Neither will mere burning suffice; to be useful it is necessary to burn and shine together, to enkindle hearts and enlighten minds, to dispel ignorance and inspire fervor: "*Est enim lucere vanum, ardere parum, lucere atque ardere perfectum.*" St. Bernard. Such is to be the purpose of your life. You will have nothing to fear or to regret by giving exclusively to this work all your time and energy; rather happy and blessed will you be if Heaven grant you the graces of light, piety, detachment, zeal and all other virtues wherewith you may accomplish this well.

When reciting the "*Nunc Dimittis,*" rejoice with holy Simeon at the tnought that the Sun of Justice is risen upon the world, and that, as the mirror whereby to reflect His rays into the souls of men, the unspotted Sun has chosen you

"*Lumen ad revelationem gentium.*" Luke, II, 32. "*Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent.*" Luke, I, 75.

MEDITATION XIII.

TONSURE, PROPERLY SO CALLED.

First Point. Adore the Savior of the world, as He is presented at the Temple during the days of His infancy. We see in Him an host destined to the altar and consecrated to the Most High; but, thanks to the figurative victims that are still to substitute for a time, His immolation is to be deferred for some years. In like manner, the cleric, called to represent Christ in His Church, is offered to God upon his entrance into the ecclesiastical state. He must offer himself as a victim to the Lord. Though no real immolation be in store for him, he is, nevertheless, truly consecrated at the foot of the altar and, in part, sacrificed there. From his person is cut off what can be cut without the shedding of blood, and upon his head he receives a visible mark of his separation from the world, of his consecration to God. Through earnest prayer the Savior will grant you the grace, at your ordination,

of entering into those very sentiments with which He Himself was animated in the moment of His presentation.

Second Point. What, then, are the dispositions you should bring to ordination?

1. To begin with, you must be no stranger to the *spirit of renunciation*: this as regards your rights and your person. For after all, to be a true Christian, to live in the spirit of the Savior, self-abnegation of some sort is altogether necessary: the inclinations and impulses of nature must be restrained. *"Omnis qui non renuntiat omnibus quae possidet non potest meus esse discipulus."* Luke, XIV, 33. But you are to become a minister of Jesus Christ; an organ, an instrument, a channel for His Holy Spirit, that God may be glorified and the souls of men helped unto sanctification. It follows, therefore, that the condition of renunciation must be fulfilled—complied with, by you especially. The old man must go — go entirely, and the sinful child of Adam be immolated with all his heritage of concupiscences: *"Sane nisi quis abnegaverit semetipsum sequi Christum omnino non potest."* St. Bernard. The cleric attests that he is ready to submit himself to this, for he offers

his head to be shorn by the bishop. For God's sake he makes a sacrifice of that which is most nearly attached to his person, which seems quite one with himself, and what, to people of the world, is usually an object of complacency and the source of much vanity: *"comam capitis sui."*

2. You make, in fine, a generous offering and *unqualified consecration* of your whole life to Our Lord. The cleric approaches the altar and offers his head to the bishop. The offering is accepted in God's name; but, as the Divine master will not deprive the Church of services She so much needs, He spares the victim, or rather, He is content with the mystical immolation, as with that of Isaac on Mt. Moriah long ago, and of His Son our Savior in the temple of Jerusalem. Instead of the tonsured himself, his hair is cut, in token of sacrifice. Were it possible or desirable, he would submit to any disfiguration. As it is, there remain some visible signs of the sacrifice. In Catholic countries he would wear the shaven crown even to the end of his days. The significance of this ceremony is lost on no one; the purport of the engagement of Tonsure is understood by all. And besides, the ordained himself proclaims it himself in the most

formal and precise language as he pronounces with the bishop, "*Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei.*"

THIRD POINT. You cannot realize too fully how important it is that you be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of detachment from creatures and of consecration to God. Spare no pains to be so, and ask of Our Lord to give you a good will and a stout heart. Pray, as best you can, that He will permit you to have no other sentiments than those in keeping with the state in which you have engaged to live; that thus, you may make of those marks of holiness, with which the Church honors and invests you, not lying symbols, but truthful expressions of a noble Christian life. "*Videamus ne sanctitatis signa inaniter gestemus, sed eis quae exterius apparent, interiora digne respondeant.*" Hugo of St. Victor.

Read Chapter VI of the Book of Numbers on the Nazarite, with the commentary of Cornelius a Lapide relative to tonsure; and, after the example of St. Magdalene of Pazzi, offer your life to Our Lord every time you recite the "*Gloria Patri*", as though you were a martyr under the sword.

MEDITATION XIV.

THE CROSS TRACED BY THE BISHOP IN GIVING TONSURE.

First Point. Our Lord has no more ardent desire than that His disciples should concern themselves with His mysteries and grasp their spirit. He wished earnestly that His ministers should meditate upon His crucifixion and draw, from constant thought of it, the love of sacrifice. It was for this that, before His passion, He spoke to His disciples of the cross to which He Himself would be fixed, and of the cross which each of them would have to bear. "*Oportet Filium hominis crucifigi.*" Luke, XXIV, 7. "*Si quis vult venire post me, tollat crucem suam.*" Luke, IX, 23. For the very same reason He engraved so deeply upon the heart of St. Paul His beloved cross, so that the Apostle seemed to be ever fastened to the cross with Him: "*Confixus cruci.*" Gal., II, 19. With the same design the bishop, in this first ordination, representing Christ, traces upon the head of the ordinand a cross, visible in its outline and preserved by the clerical tonsure wherever worn. Adore the intentions of the Master and offer

Him your heart that He may imbue it with His sentiments.

Second Point. What, think you, will be the cross imposed upon you at your entrance to the ecclesiastical state, and what is meant by receiving the chalice of the Saviour? Three things chiefly.

1. *The mortification of the old man of sin.* Unless he be immolated, concupiscence will not down and you will never be docile to the spirit of God. This mortification must extend to everything at all irregular in nature, and therefore, to every spiritual and corporal faculty, and particularly to the five senses, for they are a prolific source of sin. "*Qui Christi sunt carnem suam crucifixerunt,*" says St. Paul, "*cum vitiis et concupiscentiis.*" Gal., V, 24. The bishop, you know, in tracing the cross cuts the hair in five places. It follows then that the Tonsured should be disposed never to be unmindful of the bodily mortification of Jesus Christ, nor to fail in imitation. He cannot be too persistent in asking the grace of this perseverance.

2. *A willingness to renounce selfish, though natural, inclinations.* For example—our own will, the free disposition of our time, the application of our talents and energies. "Formerly I was free,"

says the Apostle. "I owed no man anything, but I made myself the servant of all, that I might win all to Jesus Christ:" "*Cum liber essem ex omnibus omnium me servum feci ut plures lucrifacerem.* I Cor., IX, 19. The mind of every minister of Jesus Christ ought to be impregnated with one thought: "*Qui praecessor est, sicut ministrator.*" Luke, XXII, 26. In proportion as you rise in holy Orders, let your disinterestedness increase. With Tonsure you restrict your liberty and accept the yoke of the divine ministry. Thus, the cross traced upon your head by the bishop bespeaks your new obligation.

3. *Fidelity to the duties of the clerical state* and a corresponding, worthy accomplishment of the functions with which you are entrusted. Such is the cross of the Tonsured which each must regard and cherish as his own, *crucem suam*, and receive and carry it with generous and loving heart; for this will constitute his life work; on it will depend his sanctification. Your convictions on this matter cannot be too lively and solid, nor can you make your resolutions too firm.

Third Point. You are greatly in the wrong if you look only to the advantages and consola-

tions of the clerical state, to which Tonsure admits you. You know now that there are serious duties and obligations, trials and sufferings, even, of one kind or another. *"Ipsi enim scitis quod in hoc positi sumus."* I Thess., III, 3 *"Quia et Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum ut sequamini vestigia ejus."* I Pet., II, 1. The Imitation declares that should you be another St. Paul, and, though ravished to the third heaven, you ought yet to expect suffering, and still to carry your cross, following the Savior. *"Ego, inquit Jesus, ostendam illi quanta oporteat eum pro nomine meo pati."* Imit., II., XII. 12. Truly favored and blessed are they who are found worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. More so, they who will courageously carry His cross, who with love drink His Chalice. *"Utinam dignus esses aliquid pro nomine Jesu pati: Nihil Deo acceptius, nihil tibi salubrius. Et si eligendum tibi esset, magis optare deberes pro Christo adversa pati quam multis consolationibus relevari, quia Christi similior esses et omnibus sanctis conformior." Ibid.* See that you are not weak hearted, for you will have need of strong resolves.

Meditate upon Chapter LXVI of Book III of

the Imitation; and, if you can obtain it, read the admirable exhortation of the Blessed Grignon de Montfort to the friends of the Cross.

MEDITATION XV.

THE CLERICAL CROWN.

First Point. Adore the Divine Lamb as St. John saw Him in Heaven, a glorious immolation, in the presence of God His Father. Around Him were twenty-four priests, twenty-four crowned elders, who, prostrating themselves and offering Him incense, cried out, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive all homage and praise; for you have redeemed us at the price of your blood; you have raised us above all and have associated us with you in your priesthood. "*Quoniam redemisti nos Deo in sanguine tuo et fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes.*" Apoc., V, 9–10. Join with a full heart in this adoration and thanksgiving, pondering the while the truth that the Son of God wishes to have you, even more than His elect in Heaven, participate in His priesthood and sovereignty.

Second Point. Consider the significance of the crown, placed in tonsure, on the head of the cleric.

1. It indicates the *eminence of the priestly dignity*, a share in which the cleric receives at tonsure. The crown or diadem has always been the chiefest insignia of royalty and of supreme power. But priests are kings who reign over souls, and are princes—chiefs in the kingdom of God. They wield a most extensive power, not only over the mystical members of the Savior, but over His Sacred Body as well. "*Quam dignitatem contulit vobis Deus!*" says a holy Doctor to them. "*Quanta est prerogativa ordinis vestri! Praetulit vos Deus regibus et imperatoribus; imo praetulit angelis et archangelis. Sicut enim non angelos, sed semen Abrahae apprehendit ad faciendam redemptionem, sic non angelis, sed hominibus, solisque sacerdotibus Dominici corporis et sanguinis commisit consecrationem.*" St. Bern. It is only just, then, that they should bear in some form the royal insignia, and that clerics should share in this distinction, in so far as they partake of its dignity.

2. It is also, according to the holy Doctors, a sign of the supposed virtues of the tonsured, of the *triumph he has gained over his passions* and of the command he should have over himself. "*Quid*

tam regium," says St. Leo, "*quam subditum Deo animum corporis sui esse rectorem?*" They only, are worthy to be associated with the clergy, or to be held up as models to other Christians, who have displayed their courage and worth by repeated victories over self, and by their constancy in striving for Christian perfection. "*Debet praeponderare vita, sicut praeponderat gratia.*" St. Ambrose. No other reasons can glorify the glorious titles which the Church gives at ordination, or the application she makes of Psalm XXVII, which celebrates Christ's entrance into Heaven: "*Attolite portas principes vestras, et introibit rex gloriae. Quis est iste rex gloriae? Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in proelio: Dominus virtutum ipse est rex gloriae.*"

3. Finally, *it is the symbol of the principal characteristics of a priest and of the priesthood.* Like its emblem, the clerical crown, the priestly dignity has nothing of brilliancy or ostentation. It is as modest as it is venerable. If it commands respect, it is not because of any visible splendor, but rather because of the virtue, the loftiness and nobility of mind, and the ascetic, mortified life, which ordinarily accompany it. And again, as there is nothing

therein to attract the world, neither is it flattering to nature. Far from being a title to the honors or advantages dear to the world, it brings to the receiver the obligation to renounce vanities and human ambitions and pretensions; it is altogether of a spiritual character and reveals its grandeur only to the eyes of faith.

THIRD POINT. Take these reflections to heart. They will give you a holy and wholesome esteem for the tonsure, for your calling, and for the degree of perfection to which you are called. They will give you to understand how offensive and ridiculous is the vanity of ecclesiastics who seek to make of the clerical crown a worldly ornament. And, when asked the question, put to such by St. Bernard, *"Cui ex his placere gestis? Deo, an mundo?"* your sentiments will be the higher, and you will then come to see the resemblance between your crown and that of the Savior on earth, and the resemblance between yourself and the Son of God and the blessed in Heaven. *"Exemplum coronae habemus in Christo qui spineam coronam in signum humilitatis gestavit in capite suo."* Pet. Bless. *"Seniores mittebant coronas ante thronum. . . Et cantabant canticum novum dicentes: fecisti nos Deo*

nostro regnum et sacerdotes, et regnabimus super terram." Apoc., V, 10.

Retain the words of Moses to the sons of Levi, "*Nam parum vobis est quod separavit vos Deus ab omni populo et junxit sibi, ut serviretis ei in cultu tabernaculi et ministraretis ei?*" Numb., XVI, 9: and also those attributed to Pope St. Clement, in the *Constitutiones Apostolicae;* "*Quanto anima corpore pretiosior est, tanto est sacerdotium regno excellentius.*"

MEDITATION XVI.

THE CASSOCK.

First Point. Adore the Holy Spirit, instructing us through the Church and being pleased to teach us oftener by signs than by words. In the ritual of the Old Law, He Himself had determined the ceremonies and prescribed what vestments pontiffs and priests should wear. Exod., XXXIX. In the New Law, He has left this to the care of the Church; yet, he has seen to it that the ministers of the Saviour have, as those of Aaron, vestments suitable to their condition and in accord with the dispositions with which they should be animated: "*Indices et*

custodes dignitatis." Tert. Pray the Holy Spirit to give you the grace to understand His language and to respond to His designs.

Second Point. Consider the reason of the change in the external appearance of the Tonsured, what the cassock signifies, and what obligation it imposes.

1. The change of dress, *a change of state in life* implies an analogous change in ideas, sentiments and habits: "*Prioris vestis detractio et alterius inductio significat transitum ad perfectionem.*" St. Dionys. Each being supposedly such as the condition of the wearer demands and as his external appearance indicates, one should set so great and marked a difference between the views, the ideals, and character of a man of the world and those of a minister of God, that it should be as readily perceived as is the difference between the garb of each. To lay aside the secular dress and don the cassock, is, therefore, to make open profession of becoming another man and of leading a new life.

2. The soutane is the symbol of *Christian mortification;* of the putting off of the old man. This is the profession made by the Tonsured, and to which as an ecclesiastic, he is bound more strictly than the ordinary faithful. The very color of the

habit is suggestive of death. Its simple, modest, even austere style, attests the cleric's detachment from the world—with its pleasures and vanities. The very texture, suggestive of the downfall of our first parents, should keep the wearer ever mindful of needed expiation; it should ever preach to him of penance: *"Nigra vestis insinuat humilitatem mentis; vile vestimentum denuntiat mundi contemptum."* St. Bern.

3. Sincerity, humility, respect for God, for your neighbor and for yourselves, alike *demand that* you make not of your clerical insignia a disguise and a lie, but that you strive to foster in your heart the sentiments and dispositions which your garb expresses. This obligation is the more grave, since it is here a question of religion and of holy things: *"Videamus ne sanctitatis signa inaniter gestemus."* Hugo a St. Vict. It is simple deceit to feign, before neighbors, virtues which one has not; and it is but hypocrisy to wear the livery of renunciation, of humility and of mortification, while preserving a worldly spirit and a heart given up to the vanities of the world: *"Moneo te ut quod ostendis specie, impleas opere. Non aliud abscondas intus et aliud ostendas foris: sanctus est*

habitus, sanctus sit animus; sicut sancta sunt vestimenta, sic opera tua sint sancta." St. Bern. "*Mortificate ergo membra vestra quae sunt super terram: fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam et avaritiam quae est idolorum servitus.*" Co., III., 5.

Third Point. Resolve that the soutane will never become in your eyes a mere ordinary habit, just as any secular garb. Respect it, in yourself and in others, as a religious vestment, as a symbol of your holy state: "*Ut habitum sanctae religionis.*" Pontific. Say often, as St. Bernard did: "*Moriatur anima mea morte justorum! Bona mors, quae vitam non aufert, sed transfert in melius.*" Beg of Our Lord to infuse into your heart the dispositions which the cassock signifies and never to permit you to entertain any spirit contrary to that of which it is the outward expression: "*Ut sicut immutaris in vultu, ita Deus tribuat virtutis incrementum; et dum ignominiam saecularis habitus deponis, ejus semper in aevum gratia perfruaris.*" Pontific.

May the soutane be to you as is the habit of his order to every religious; an instruction, an exhortation, and a blessing.

MEDITATION XVII.

THE SURPLICE.

First Point. Adore the Son of God, granting us on Thabor a glimpse of the glory which He now enjoys in heaven. "His garments were white as the snow," says the Evangelist, and His countenance shone with the splendor and purity of the sun: "*vestimenta ejus facta sunt alba sicut nix.*" Matt., XVII, 2. In like manner, also, did He appear to St. John in those symbolic visions which unveiled to him the mysteries of the future: "*Caput ejus tamquam lana alba et tamquam nix.*" Apoc., 1, 14.

So will he reveal Himself one day to those who will keep themselves pure and will follow Him in the path of virtue: "*Qui non inquinaverint vestimenta sua ambulabunt cum eo in albis.*" Apoc., III, 4. Such ought to be, in due proportion, the lives of those who are consecrated to Him and who are admitted to His service in the sanctuary.

Second Point. Consider now the significance of the surplice, then of its whiteness, and of its attractiveness.

1. The surplice, with which the bishop vests the Tonsured, signifies the *grace* with which God

wishes to adorn his soul, the celestial life which He desires to communicate to him, the spirit of the Savior which He gives to supplant and replace in him the spirit of nature and of the world. Thus is clearly explained the words of the Apostle, which the bishop pronounces during the ceremony: "*Induat te Dominus novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis.*" Ephes., V, 24. It is as if he said: "It is not enough that the old man, the author of sin in the world and the source of all concupiscence, has ceased to live and rule in you; for this is implied by the soutane, the garb of mortification with which you have been vested: it is further required of you that the new man, the second Adam, the head of regenerated humanity, be established within you and reign there by his spirit; that Jesus Christ alone appear in your person and show forth His virtues in your life: "*Primus homo de terra terrenus, secundus homo de cœlo cœlestis. Qualis terrenus tales et terreni, et qualis cœlestis talis et cœlestes. Sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem cœlestis.* I Cor., XV, 47.

2. The whiteness of the surplice expresses fitly the *innocence and purity* of the life an ecclesiastic ought to lead, the opposition of his holy state to

sin, and, particularly, aversion to or exclusion of even venial stains: "*Decebat ut esset Pontifex sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus.*" Heb. VII, 26. As the whiteness of the surplice, so the innocence of the soul is only with difficulty preserved intact: the least stain disfigures and soils it; and purity may be recovered only with painful effort, through tears and suffering.

3. The attractiveness of the surplice bespeaks the pre-eminent and *exceptional virtue* which should mark the life of an ecclesiastic: "*Datum est illi ut cooperiat se byssino splendenti et candido. Byssinum enim sunt justificationes sanctorum.*" Apoc., XIX. 8. It will not suffice, therefore, that a cleric give no cause for reproach before his fellow men, "*ut sit sine crimine,*" I Tim., III; It is for him to edify the faithful by his conduct and to obtain the esteem even of those who do not believe. Aye, his merits must deserve for him a certain distinction: "*Ut sit ornatus,*" that his being an example of Christian perfection may serve at once as an encouragement to the faithful, as a stimulant to the tepid and as a salutary reproach to sinners.

Third Point. Resolve to become thoroughly imbued with these principles, for they are the

principles of our holy Church, and never don your surplice without recalling them. *"Dum superpelliceum induit, cogitet clericus quam personam sustineat."* Conc. Mediol. Resolve that your surplice will be always white and clean, as the emblem of a spotless life; but above all, that it will be to you a constant reminder of the fundamental maxim, that, instead of the old man of imperfection and of sin, which are the fruits of the vitiated nature we have received from Adam, instead of this, men may behold in you another Christ because of your virtues, your religiousness, your humility and zeal, no less than your modesty and your purity: *"Expoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis et induentes novum, sicut electi Dei, sancti et dilecti, benignitatem, humilitatem, modestiam, patientiam.* Col. III, 10–12.

Never fail to repeat, each time you take up your surplice, the words you uttered when receiving it in Tonsure: *"Indue me, Domine, novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis."*

MEDITATION XVIII.

ON THE WORDS "DOMINUS PARS" ETC.

First Point. Adore God accomplishing with wise moderation His most momentous designs, and preluding with the Law of Moses the establishment of the Christian Church, with its hierarchy, its pontificate and divers orders. To one entire tribe, that of Levi, He entrusted the exercise of divine worship. He would have its every member concerned only with this office and bestow on it all care: *"Eo tempore separavit tribum Levi ut staret coram eo in ministerio et benediceret in nomine ejus: quamobrem non habuit partem Levi cum fratribus suis."* Deut., X, 8. In return, as a recompense for the revenue from the territory which this tribe thus renounced, God provided for their subsistence and gave them as their portion a part of the first fruits, tithes and victims which were offered: *Sacrificia Domini et oblationes ejus comedent. Dominus enim ipse est hæreditas eorum.* Deut., XVIII, 2. Thus does God make clear what is to be, under the New Law, the spirit of the Divine priesthood; how detached the ministers of the Savior are to be from things of earth; with what

generosity and zeal and purity of intention they are to apply themselves to promoting the honor of God and the sanctification of their brethren. It is as an assurance of these dispositions that the bishop, when opening the gate of the sanctuary to the tonsured, makes him pronounce these words: "*Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ et calicis mei.*" Beg of God the grace to understand these words well and to think and act according to them.

Second Point. On the lips of the tonsured these words signify two things: that he gives himself without reserve to Our Lord, and that he wishes to seek only what Our Lord will have him seek.

First. The tonsured *gives himself* to Our Lord. He promises for the future to live only for Him. "*Cui portio Deus est, nihil curare debet præter Deum,*" says St. Ambrose. Men of the world have each their occupation, their concerns, and aims. Some are employed in manual labor, others in intellectual pursuits. This one seeks a fortune, that one honors and dignities, while another desires fame. What is common to all, is that their interests are of this world. They work to establish, to raise, to aggrandize themselves and their families:

"Solliciti sunt quae sunt mundi." I Cor., VII, 33. God does not disapprove of this, and even these temporal pursuits, provided they keep within proper limits, have a place in His Providential plan and enter into His designs. But from His ministers He asks more. He wishes that they be His without reserve, belong to Him entirely and exclusively and that they serve Him with their whole heart, with their whole mind and with all their strength. *"Consecrabis oblatos Domino,"* says He to the Levites, *"ut sint mei et serviant mihi pro Israel et orent pro eis."* Num., VIII, 13. *"Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis sæcularibus,"* says the Apostle, *"ut ei placeat cui se probavit."* II Tim., II, 4.

With this understanding, with this purpose of responding to the designs of God, the tonsured gives himself to the Lord and is received by the bishop into the ranks of the clergy. He gives himself to God entirely. He consecrates to His worship all that he possesses, his body and soul, his mind and heart, his time and strength, his health and his fortune, and, in a word, all he has and is. Such is the profession each cleric makes before the holy altar.

2. He protests to Our Lord that he desires only Him and *that he wishes henceforth to seek nothing outside of Him*: *"Portio mea Dominus."* Ps. CXVIII, 57. Why do the greater part of men occupy themselves with things of the world and concern themselves with its affairs? Simply because they seek a share in what the world has to offer, and they thus take the proper means for attaining their desires. The tonsured, in renouncing such occupations and concerns, renounces also the enjoyment they bring. He gives up worldly fortune and material well-being, honors and pleasures. Thereby, too, in giving himself to God without reserve, he testifies that, in his eyes, God is the Supreme and only treasure worthy of the name. He says with David: *"Quid mihi est in cœlo et a te quid volui super terram, Deus cordis mei, et pars mea in aeternum?"* Ps. LXXII, 25. And with St. Augustine: *"Eligant sibi alii partes quibus fruantur terrenas ac temporales: portio sanctorum Dominus. Bibant mortiferas voluptates: portio calicis mei, Dominus aeternus est."* And with St. Paulinus he says, *"Sibi habeant litteras suas oratores, sibi sapientiam suam philosophi, sibi divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges: nobis gloria et possessio et*

regnum Christus est!" Happy those, who render themselves worthy of such a portion, and who, in giving themselves unreservedly to Our Lord, merit in turn that Our Lord should give Himself unreservedly to them! Happy that one, who can say to Him as truly as He said to His Father in Heaven, "*Mea omnia tua sunt, et tua mea sunt*"! John, XVII, 10. If Our Lord asks the undivided love of His ministers, it is only that He may be their sole happiness. "O minister of the Savior," says St. Ambrose, "cherish the part you have chosen, for it is a goodly portion and not to be measured by all the world has to offer, or holds most dear." "It is the Paradise of the earth," says St. Bernard, "a paradise preferable even to that of Adam in the days of his innocence:" "*Paradisum habemus meliorem quam primi parentes. Paradisus noster Christus est!*" St. Bernard.

Third Point. To belong to God, to desire to serve God, to seek only the things which are of God, is not this perfection, sanctity itself? Yes, it would be perfection if that state were constant, assured and steadfast. But who can promise himself that he will be thus firmly established therein and forever? Who would presume to give

such assurance before the altar? *"Quam rarus in terris qui possit dicere: Portio mea Dominus!"* St. Amb. *"Nam verum pauperem spiritu et ab omni creatura nudum, quis inveniet?"* Imit., II, XI, 4. So, it is not this which the Church asks of the cleric. She demands only that he have a sincere desire, and be disposed to do all that is required of him to become such. Such is the disposition that will be required of you, and such the engagement you make on the day of your ordination. It is upon this, then, that you are to examine yourself; for this it is, principally, that will give all possible strength to your resolutions.

Psalm XV *"Conserva me"* is the expression of the sentiments of the sovereign Priest, Our Lord Himself. Repeat each morning the *"Dominus Pars"* when donning your cassock: recall often this reflection of a great saint of the seventeenth century. *"He is too avaricious for whom God does not suffice."*

SECTION III.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE TONSURED.

MEDITATION XIX.

THE CLERICAL STATE.

First Point. Admire the care Our Lord took to make clear to His Apostles the nature of their vocation, and to bring them to see in its true light the mission that was in store for them. Without confounding them by a revelation of the illusions they had formed in this regard, He set about correcting their ideas gradually and elevating their minds. "Ask not of Me the first places at My side," He says to them, "and think not to rule in My kingdom. You see that I exercise no dominion, and that, rather than being ministered unto, I am become the servant of all. Instead, you should ask yourselves whether you can share in My sacrifice and drink My chalice. For, to have part in My ministry, to walk in the way with Me, and to arrive at the

destination whither I am tending, you must commence as I have done, by denying yourselves, by foregoing your own tastes and likings, your selfish interests, aye, even your life; then, to take up your cross daily, to carry it after Me, never looking back, but having one purpose ever in mind, the will of your heavenly Father and the establishment of His kingdom.'' Take to heart these maxims and let the example of the Apostles be your inspiration.

Second Point. Mark well the principal characteristics of the clerical state and the dispositions you should bring to it.

1. It is a state of *detachment*. All those whom God has destined to His service, to work for His glory, are called upon to detach themselves from created interests, and this that they may be the more perfect, since God has set them to works of a higher order and importance. You know what sacrifices God required of Abraham in order that He might make him the father of the chosen people: of Moses, that He might entrust to him the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt and the leadership in the desert; of the tribe of Levi, that they might in some measure be less unworthy of consecration to the service of His altars: of the prophets,

that they be the organs of the Holy Spirit; and of His Apostles, in order to make of them the representatives of His Son and the founders of His Church. But more than all, reflect upon the sacrifices required of His own Jesus Christ, that He might be the glory of the Father and the Savior of men: here have we *the* model, the model of all Christians, the model especially of priests.

2. It is a state of *union,* of intimacy, of sympathy *with the spirit and heart of the Man-God.* The Lord, having chosen Moses as the leader of His people, prepared him for his mission by long intercourse. He called him to the summit of a mountain and there for forty days spoke to him in most intimate converse. Jesus Christ, desiring that His Apostles take His place and carry on His work after His death, kept them at His side for three whole years, lived intimately with them, expounded to them most fully His doctrine, imbued their minds with His sentiments and communicated to them His spirit. So you, if you are to have part in the ministry of the Apostles, if you will to be like them, a preacher of the Gospel, a dispenser of the holy mysteries, an ambassador of the Savior, another Jesus Christ upon earth (Luke,

X, 16), you must give yourself to diligent study, frequently receive the Holy Eucharist, be a man of prayer, united heart and mind with your Master; in fine, do what you can to so become, that your manner, your speech, your works may be in all things like those of Jesus Christ: *"Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu."* Phil., II, 5. *"Christus vita nostra."* Col., III, 3. *"Itaque jam non nostram, sed Christi vitam, sed Christum ipsum vivamus."* St. Ambrose.

3. It is a state of *devotedness, solicitude,* and *labor.* For God, we are to secure His glory, spread His worship and propagate His kingdom; for the Church, who confers our dignity upon us, we are charged with defense of her rights and the safety of her interests; for each of the faithful entrusted to us, we have to procure their sanctification. This, in brief, is our work. *Ministers of God, pastors of the flock of Christ, directors of individual souls;* each of these titles implies a life of abnegation, of labor and of sacrifice.

Third Point. Examine whether this is what you have habitually considered, in aspiring to the clerical state, and whether you have made preparation for it with these views. Depend upon it,

the man who seeks in it any other end, who consults primarily other interests than those of God and the Church, is in utter opposition to the designs of Jesus Christ, and is devoid of His spirit. Unless he set right his mind and intentions in this, he will find in the clerical state neither the peace of heart nor the sense of security which are the portion of devoted, self-forgetting, generous souls; but will compromise his happiness in this life and, very probably, in the next. *"Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet illam; et qui perdiderit animam suam propter me, salvam faciet eam."* Luke, IX, 24.

Love to read the lives of holy priests. There is no better means of gaining a true notion of the clerical state and to learn in what the perfection of the life consists: *"Interrogate de sanctis antiquis quae sit via bona, et ambulate in ea."* Jer., VI, 6.

MEDITATION XX.

CHRISTIAN AND CLERICAL ABNEGATION.

First Point. Adore the Son of God calling disciples to Himself and telling them what they must do if they would be His followers. When He

had said to them, "*Veni post me.*" (Matt., IV, 19) and required them to leave family and pursuits, He declared unto each and all: "*Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum; tollat crucem suam quotidie et sequatur me.*" Luke, IX, 23. This maxim we find repeated in many Gospel texts, and, each time, formulated in unequivocal terms. Nowhere, nor at any time, is it possible without self-denial, inconvenience and restraint, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, to be His disciple, and, a fortiori, to act as His minister. Realize now, once for all, that renunciation and sacrifice are the basic elements of the Christian, and more particularly, of the clerical life. Ask of Our Divine Master the grace to learn this, your lesson, to take it well to heart and to put it in practice.

Second Point. Each of the Savior's words is meaningful.

1. "*Si quis vult venire post me.*" Jesus Christ seeks disciples and He has need of ministers; but, His purpose is neither to take advantage of nor to force any one. He will have only voluntary subjects. In His sanctuary, above all, He can suffer no slaves. He wishes to be served with a full heart, by preference and with love. Therefore, He will use

no violence; He is content with inviting, soliciting, calling those whom He wants in His especial service. To them He leaves full liberty, that they may have all the merit of their choice. He refrains from commanding almost invariably, and imposes no rigorous obligation. *"Si quis vult,"* He says: He speaks to the heart. Wherefore, it would seem that He is the One you should consult as to whether you are called upon to give yourself to Him, and whether you can accept His conditions.

2. *"Abneget semetipsum."* Self-renunciation is very comprehensive. The sturdy Christian and worthy ecclesiastic take the Savior at His word and make no reservations in their practice of self-denial. They are sincere in their purpose to become Christians, other Christs, and, once and for all, cease to be children of Adam. The irregular inclinations inherited from our first parents they restrain. They realize the insincerity of pretending to belong wholly to Jesus Christ, devoted in spirit to their Heavenly Father, without putting off the old man of sin and breaking with old interests and attachments, and they act honorably and count not the cost. *"Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, ut uxorem, et filios, et sorores,*

adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus." Luke, XIV, 26. "*Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem: duo autem sibi invicem adversantur ut non quaecumque vultis illa faciatis.*" Gal., V, 17.

3. "*Tollat crucem suam.*" It is, then, not renunciation only, but sacrifice as well, that the Savior requires. Self-immolation is the word, or, as St. Paul says, "Crucifixion of the flesh with all its concupiscences." In other words, to undergo, in some sense, the same treatment that sin inflicted upon Jesus Christ. "*Qui Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis.*" Gal., V, 24. As a matter of fact, unless nature is mortified and sin rooted out, so that the flesh is rendered as impotent as though nailed to the cross and thus incapable of concupiscence of any kind, the reign of Jesus in the soul will never be solidly established. There must be a resemblance to the crucified Saviour found in us, otherwise the spirit cannot take up His abode with us and hold His wonted sway. Much less can one claim to be truly the representative of the Savior, or that Christ lives in him. "*Mortificationem Jesu, circumferentes,*" says St.

Paul, *"ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in corporibus nostris."* II Cor., IV, 10.

4. *"Quotidie."* This word is not the least in importance. We learn from it that it is not enough to make a single act of renunciation; for example, on entering the clerical state; but it must be continued, renewed when opportunity offers. We are to "live" the life of the Savior, not to imitate Him occasionally. And this we cannot do if we change our dispositions, retract our promises, live again in sensuality and agreeably to nature. This is not the work of the Holy Spirit. Such a life is no longer supernatural or Christian, and far less priestly: *"Quod natum est ex carne, caro est."* John, III, 6. *"Quicumque spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei."* Rom., VIII, 14.

Third Point. You see, then, what Our Lord requires of His ministers. You know now what is the state you are about to enter: *"Sacerdotem hoc sentire oportet quod est in Christo Jesu; non solum ut se per humilitatem exinanimet, sed ut crucifixionem Domini repræsentans, stigmata ejus portet in corpore suo et in ara crucis seipsum Domino configat."* Pet. Bles. Go to your ordination as to a sacrifice, remembering that you can

become a priest such as Christ is, only on the condition of being immolated with Him, "*ut adimpleas ea quae desunt passionum Christi, pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia.*" Col, I, 24. You see, too, how he would miss the true notion of the priesthood who would seek, in the service of Jesus Christ, nothing but his own interests and satisfactions. His would be a sad mistake, boding no good to his soul. "*Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam,*" says Our Lord: "*Qui autem perdiderit animam suam propter me inveniet eam.*" Matt., XVI, 25.

Adopt this practice of Fr. Olier: "In the morning, and before each new work, renounce your own will that you may do all for Our Lord living in your soul, thus to embrace the cross and live a spiritual life in continual mortification." You would do well to use the Examens on Mortification, by Rodriguez, or Tronson.

"*Attendat studiose sacerdos ne seipsun sine significato portet, ne forte similis sit sepulchro dealbato omni spurcitia pleno.*" Durand, III *Ration* III, t. 5.

MEDITATION XXI.

DISREGARD FOR THE GOODS OF THIS WORLD.

First Point. Adore the Man God as, with mind illumined even in this life, He contemplates the unrevealed perfections of the Divinity, and fixes thereon His heart, His veneration, His admiration and His love. Imagine what He would think of created things, especially of the goods of earth which men wrangle and contend for. Disdain, disgust, aversion; even these words are feeble expressions. *"Eccein sulae quasi pulvis exiguus. Ecce gentes quasi stilla situlae, et quasi nihilum et inane reputatae sunt ei."* Is., XLI, 15–17. A saint has said, *"Quam sordet terra, dum coelum aspicio!"* What would he have said if he had seen the God of Heaven and been able to contemplate Him as did the Only Begotten Son. There is nothing good, nothing lovable, nothing desirable, save God alone; *"Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus."* Luke, XVIII, 19.

Second Point. Consider what, in reality, the goods of the world most sought, fortune, honors, and pleasures, are. They are uncertain, fleeting, and incapable of giving satis-

faction even to those who are best provided with them.

1. They are *uncertain*. There is no assurance either that they will come our way, or that we shall be able to enjoy them even for the moment in which they do come. "*Cum magna expectatione sperantur ut veniant, et non possunt teneri, cum venerint.*" St. Aug. The greater number of men who seek them, die before they can be attained: even the most fortunate in this respect are successful only late in life, and the day of enjoyment is far spent. Besides, whatever the age at which they are realized, or the means whereby they are obtained, one can never be assured that he will enjoy them; for, by nature, they are elusive, unstable, more fugitive even than life. It would seem that this defect alone would despoil them of their prestige in the eyes of men who are not blinded by passion.

2. They *cannot last*. Even were the enjoyment of them to begin with life and continue uninterrupted until death, what then? What is this present life to an immortal being? Weigh in the balance thirty, fifty, eighty years of comfort, honor and success against an eternity of suffering, desolation and shame. A year might seem a length of time to

a child just come into life; but a century is, at best, a little thing to a man who knows the rapid flight of time, the nothingness of the past, the immensity of the future. What shall we think of the days of our lives swallowed up in the thousands of centuries to come, when we shall look back and try to discern them from the height of heaven and from the depths of eternity? "*Transierunt tamquam umbra et tamquam nuntius percurrens, et tamquam navis, cujus, cum pertransierit, non est vestigium inveniri.*" Sap., V, 10.

3. They *do not satisfy* the craving of the soul even in the moment of enjoyment. What is more ordinary and comfortless than the laments of the so-called happy ones of the world? Those seemingly best off, are the ones who complain most. They speak only of illusions, ennui, and disgust. "*Ecce universa vanitas et afflictio spiritus,*" said Solomon. Human experience has ever been that the world and its goods fall far short of our desires in the end. They are external and do not penetrate beyond the senses: true peace and joy are from within the very depths of the soul, and are undisturbed by the ruffles on the surface. They are not of the kind that satiate and satisfy the soul in its noblest and keenest

desires. "What profits pleasure to me, or why should I set value on it?" says the man truly happy. "I have the joy of God in the depth of my heart." "*Dedisti laetitiam in corde meo.*" Ps., IV, 7.

THIRD POINT. Pray God to open your eyes to the vanity and worthlessness of those seeming goods which you are called upon to forego. If you would avoid delusion, renounce without hesitation every one of them for love of Him. "*Si sapis, si habes cor, desine jam ea sequi quae et asscqui miserum est, quae amata inquinant, possessa onerant, amissa cruciant.*" (S. Bernard.) St. Teresa had the happiness of telling God that she preferred Him to all the world had or could offer. She simply said that she preferred all to nothing. The Apostle uttered a like sentiment: "*Omnia detrimentum feci et arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam.*" Phil., III, 8. "What I give up is nothing, filth even, compared to the Savior whom I choose for my portion."

Read the first Chapter of St. Cyprian to Donatus. "I was once young, and am now old," says St. Norbert. "I have been at the Court and have lived in the cloister. Dignities and riches have been mine. But I attest, in all truth, that but one thing

is worthy of the name of happiness; to belong to Jesus Christ, and to love Him with a generous heart."

MEDITATION XXII.

WHAT THE WORLD DESERVES.

First Point. Recall the aversion for the world evinced by the Savior. By the world He meant, that, in the society of men, which comes not from God and tends not to God. "Woe to the world," He said; "*Vae mundo a scandalis!*" Matt., XVIII, 7 With all His love for souls and compassion for sinners, the Divine Master is obliged to do violence to Himself in order to bear the sight of the world and to refrain from exposing it the more. "*O generatio prava et adultera, quamdiu apud vos ero! quamdiu vos patiar!*" Mark, IX, 9. And these sentiments He had to express publicly, and lost no opportunity to impress them upon His Apostles: "*De mundo non estis,*" He says to them, "*sed ego elegi vos de mundo; propterea odit vos mundus.*" John, XV, 19. Adore this disposition and attitude of the Savior towards the world, assured that it is most just and holy, and beg Him to give you to share it.

Second Point. Consider the world in relation to God and to souls, bearing in mind the aversion it inspired in the Savior and in His true ministers.

1. The world is the greatest *enemy of God* here below. It is not only not subjected to God, but is ever in open antagonism to Him. It tramples His laws under foot, thwarts His designs and compels Him to destroy the very works of His hands. It lures away many of His subjects by its seductions, its scandals, and by human respect. At the sight of this we can well understand the bitter denunciation uttered by the Savior, which strikes a responsive chord in the heart of every worthy Christian and cleric. David so felt, among the prevaricators; Lot also, whilst within the walls of Sodom; and all the prophets as they beheld the idols and the abominations of haughty Babylon. *"Vidi praevaricantes et tabescebam. . . Tabescere me fecit zelus meus."* Ps. CXVIII, 139, 158. *"Filia Babylonis misera, beatus qui tenebit et allidet parvulos tuos ad petram!"* Ps. CXXXVII, 9. Is it not a sure principle, that the greater esteem, veneration, or love one has for a person, the more one is filled with hatred, aversion and horror for anything that would displease or outrage him?

2. The world is the *murderer of souls.* In the work of seducing and damning souls, the demon has no greater auxiliary. The world by its example, and by its words as well, saturates the minds and hearts of men with its fatal maxims of human prudence which are utterly opposed to the teachings of Divine Wisdom Its scandals familiarize good souls with the sight of sin: little by little, it weakens and stifles in their hearts that horror of sin which grace inspires; it ends by persuading them, or a good number at least, that true and constant virtue is a chimerical illusion. Thus it seduces souls and curbs and binds the wills of men with a blind conviction. At length, that influence is so powerful that the first attempt of a soul, which determines to assure its own salvation, is, almost always, to place itself out of reach of its assaults by breaking with the society of men. So, too, the first care of the Holy spirit, when He wishes to form a faithful servant, is to open his heart to the words of advice once given to Abraham, to Lot, to Moses and to so many of the prophets and saints: *"Egredere, salvum te fac."* Gen., XII, 1; XIX, 27. As already said, the Son of God Himself, the most zealous lover of souls, Who came on earth

only to save them, Who shed His blood willingly, and to the last drop, that Heaven might more surely be theirs, hated the world as His most hateful adversary. He would not pray for it. John, XVII, 9. Wherefore, you, who are to be a minister of this Divine Savior, the organ of His spirit for the sanctification of your fellows, you can be of but one mind: the mind which was in Christ Jesus, an aversion for the world, a hatred even, deep, constant, insurmountable.

Third Point. Charity does not forbid you to hate the world. Quite the contrary. Charity, that is the love of God and of souls, ought to inspire aversion, contempt. "*Si quis diligit mundum, non est caritas Patris in eo,*" says St. John; "*quoniam omne quod est in mundo concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum et superbia vitae.*" II John, II, 15. "*Quicumque ergo voluerit amicus esse saeculi hujus, inimicus Dei constituitur.*" James, IV, 4. Ask Heaven to give you this disposition of mind, and strive to solidly establish it on the doubly sound basis of the love of your neighbor and the love of God.

To love God and to hate sin, to give yourself to Our Lord and to give up the world, to take the

cassock and to cast aside secular dress, are one and the same thing. It is as impossible to walk in two roads at once as it is to serve two masters. *"Usquequo claudicatis in duas partes? Si Dominus est Deus, sequimini illum."* III Kings, XVIII, 21.

MEDITATION XXIII.

DETACHMENT FROM RELATIVES.

First Point. Adore the Son of God offering you in His life an example of most perfect detachment from relatives and of unqualified devotion to His holy ministry. When He was but twelve years He sought to prepare His mother for the sacrifice He would require of her. After having separated Himself for several days from her tender care, He told her plainly, when she found Him out, that He must consecrate Himself entirely to His Father's business. From the day He commenced His preaching, He knew no more His mother's roof; He had no other abode, no family circle than that of His disciples: *"Quæ est mater mea et qui sunt fratres mei? Quicumque fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, ipse meus frater et soror et mater est."* Matt., XII., 48–50. Here is detachment, and loftiness of mind that you

can well admire. For the asking, Jesus will give you to share these dispositions even as He gave to His apostles.

Second Point. An ecclesiastic should be detached from his relatives. For two reasons.

1. Because attachment to relatives, an immoderate affection and concern for them, is, like every other unbecoming attachment, a prolific *source of imperfections* and infidelities. How many ecclesiastics but half respond to the call of God, for fear of grieving their family or incurring their displeasure? How many priests, for the very same reason, dare not follow the inspirations of their zeal or their charity in the care of their church, in aid of their poor, in visiting and tending their sick, in the management, even, of their own household? How many a minister of God, in whose soul the love of family and relatives has brought again to vigorous life the spirit of the world, the taste for luxury, desire of material comfort and wealth, selfishness and ambition? Many would have become saintly men of God had they followed the inspirations of God and, in their charity and zeal, withdrawn from these attractions, stifled this affection for family and friends, or gone into a more remote

field of labor; yet now they simply vegetate in a life that is lukewarm and secular, in the neighborhood of their native parish, under the yoke of habits and ties which the example and the society of their brethren have imposed upon them even since the days of their childhood.

"*Longe a parentibus salus,*" says a holy bishop, the predecessor of St. Francis de Sales. "*Si mei non fuerint dominati,*" exclaimed a dying Pope, "*tunc immaculatus ero et emundabor a delicto maximo.*"

2. Because *a heart cannot belong properly to God* when it cherishes an attachment to any one else, or when it loves anything other than God or for God. An ecclesiastic who sets no store on anything but God and His grace, will do incomparably more good than a number of others whose devotion to God's service is only half-hearted; for, in these latter the work of the Holy Spirit is greatly restricted. It is needless to add that they will correspondingly increase in merit and perfection. "*Perfectio tua et doctrina tua viro sancto tuo qui dixit patri suo et matri suae: Nescio vos; et fratribus suis; Ignoro vos.*" Deut., XXXIII, 9. Therefore, the first sacrifice that Our Lord Jesus Christ

requires of you is, detachment from relatives. He dealt so with His apostles, and for their compliance He made His promises: "*Amen dico vobis; omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres, vel sorores, aut patrem, aut matrem propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitam aeternam possidebit.*" Matt., XIX, 29.

Third Point. Let there be no reserve or incompleteness in the gift you are about to make of yourself to God. Do not be like those who are ever fearful lest they undertake too much, or that they will treat nature too harshly. "*Vae patrono carnis?*" "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," says Jesus Christ. Is not God the first and foremost of fathers? If the sacrifice thus made is agreeable to Him, who shall complain of it? And if, in the interest of His glory, you do impose some privation more or less grievous on your parents or relatives, have you not the example of the Divine Master Himself as your authority and model in so doing? "*Sacerdos Dei summi, sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia, assimilatus Filio Dei.*" Hebr., VII., 3.

MEDITATION XXIV.

JESUS CHRIST THE SOURCE OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE

First Point. Adore Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, as the source and model of the supernatural life you ought to lead: *"Ego sum vita,"* said He to His apostles, John, XIV, 6. It is I who am the life, the source and plenitude of life: *"Sicut Pater habet vitam in semetipso, sic dedit et Filio habere vitam in semetipso,"* Joan., V, 26. Then He adds that He is come into the world to bring to men His life and seeks only to communicate it: *"Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant."* John, X, 10. Render homage to this Divine Master, who at once has become your life and your Saviour: offer Him your soul that He may take possession of it, vivify it, and dispose of it according to His own holy designs.

Second Point. That you may be penetrated with this truth, that Jesus Christ is the source of the supernatural life, consider it *in itself* and *in regard to yourself*.

1. It is a revealed, and therefore incontestable point of faith, that without Jesus Christ there is no salvation, or, that it is only from Him that men

are to obtain graces necessary for the sanctification of their souls and thereby become pleasing to Our Heavenly Father. He has affirmed this most positively: "*Ego sum vitis, vos palmites, sicut palmes non potest facere fructus a semetipso, nisi manserit in vite, sic nec vos, nisi in ne manseritis. Qui manet in me, hic fert fructum multum; si quis in me non manserit, mittetur sicut palmes, et arescet; et in ignem mittent et ardet.*" Joan., XV, 1, 4, 5. St. Paul develops and elucidates this doctrine in divers texts and by a novel comparison: "*Sicut corpus unum est et membra habet multa, omnia autem membra corporis, cum sint multa, unum tamen sunt corpus, ita et Christus. Etenim in uno spiritu omnes nos baptizati sumus et omnes in uno spiritu potati sumus.*" I Cor., XII, 12. 13. Thus the Man God is as a tree, of which we Christians are the branches; as a head, with which Christians form the body and are the members thereof. As the branches have no life but that of the trunk, or as the members of the body have but one life with the head, so, too, as Christians, as children of God, we can have no other life than that of the Word Made Flesh, into Whom we have been incorporated, upon Whom we have been engrafted:

"*Christus vita vestra.*" Col., III, 3. "*Si quis spiritum Christi non habet, hic non est ejus.* Rom., VIII, 9.

2. Another truth, no less certain, is, that ecclesiastics have need of participating, more abundantly than the faithful, in the graces and in the life of the Savior. And that for two reasons—First, because clerics ought to produce greater fruit by the exercise of greater virtue. The cleric, since he is destined to serve as a model for other Christians, is expected to lead a holier life, to abound more in good works, to attain higher perfection: "*Illi qui divinis mysteriis applicantur perfecti in virtute esse debent.*" St. Thos. Secondly, Because they are to be the channels and organs through which grace and spiritual life reaches the souls of men; and, it must be remembered that, in general, one communicates only what he already possesses in abundance: "*Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur,*" says Our Lord, "*Bonus homo de bono thesauro cordis sui profert bona.*" Matt., XII, 34, 35. "*Si repletae fuerint nubes imbrem effundent super terram.*" Eccle., XI, 3. Is it not, then, for this very reason that Our Lord has given to His ministers the first places at the Eucharistic table, and

that He exhorts them and invites them in an especial manner to abide with Him? "*Manete in me; qui manet in me hic fert fructum multum.*" Joan., XV, 3, 5.

THIRD POINT. Try to respond to the desire, which Our dear Lord has expressed, that you be of one mind with Him and thus allow Him to communicate His life to you. Rather than be like to those Jews to whom He says with sadness, "*Non vultis venire ad me ut vitam habeatis,*" (Joan., V, 40,) let it be your chiefest desire to be filled with His saving grace and to be animated with His holy spirit. All the exercises of the seminary are instituted but for this one purpose; to establish Christ's reign in your heart and soul. To this end also, should be directed your every desire, all your cares; not to speak of your prayers, and above all, your holy Communions: "*Vivere Deo in Christo Jesu.*" Rom., VII, 11. He has promised that all those who nourish their souls with His Bread will live by His life. Joan., VI, 58. Strive, then, to receive this divine nourishment with such becoming dispositions that it may produce in you this happy effect, that you may have the happiness of saying with the Apostle:

"Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus!" Gal., II, 20.

Read "I am the Way," by Fr. Nouet, and ask Our Lord to give you the grace to understand and to be imbued with its spirit. *"Da nobis recta sapere."*

MEDITATION XXV.

THE SEMINARY THE TRAINING SCHOOL OF THE CLERIC.

First Point. Adore the Son of God ever with His Church according to His infallible promise (Matth., XXVIII, 20), enlightening her by His Spirit in the exercise of authority and the teaching of doctrine, and suggesting to Her, according to the needs of the times, laws, reforms, and institutions which will best serve her interests. He inspired the Council of Trent with the idea of seminaries for the education of the clergy and made them to be established. Thank the Divine Savior for the signal grace thus given to His clergy and His Church, and rejoice also, that so many ecclesiastics have attained to sanctity in and through these schools of training. Ask of God the grace

to profit by their example, to be a worthy successor, and to share in their blessings.

Second Point. If you would know what aid you can receive at the seminary in order to worthily respond to your vocation, just reflect upon the views of its founders, the exercises practised therein, and the results accomplished.

1. The one, only and unique *purpose* of the *seminary* is to furnish the Church with worthy ministers. This is done by aiding those, whom God has honored with a vocation, to preserve themselves from baneful influences and occasions of sin, to help them in the acquisition of clerical science and virtue, and to animate and imbue their minds with the spirit of the Savior, the Sovereign Priest. This alone the Council had in mind when ordering the establishment of these houses, and this also is the mind of those who direct them. In view of this purpose the rule of the house, its character, everything, in fact, connected with it is determined and fixed. So much pains and effort have not been profitless. The road to clerical proficiency, virtue and spirit, is clearly laid out and for three centuries has been trodden by numberless aspirants to the priesthood, and each found that

it does not lead astray. Divine wisdom has had a hand in the government of the Church. You can safely take things as you find them on entrance. The worth of each has been proven.

2. It suffices to reflect briefly on the *exercises* of the seminary to be convinced that nothing is wanting that can help in the formation of a true priestly character and that the prescribed, habitual observance of these exercises very naturally develops in the ordinands the qualities and virtues required in the holy ministry. These exercises can be placed in three classes. First, those of study: their purpose is to enlighten the seminarian on all those matters which as a priest he must know and teach; namely, Jesus Christ and His doctrine, dogmatic and moral, His Church and her laws. The second class of exercises are of piety; as meditation, the reading of Holy Scripture and of spiritual authors. These are to fill the heart with the revealed truths, to make one love, cherish, and to put them into practise in one's daily life. The exercises which make up the third class, consist in the frequenting of the sacraments and in prayer, properly so-called. Their effect is to unite the soul more closely to God, to draw down His grace, His spirit,

His gifts and His virtues. The resultant effect of all combined exercises, is to conform our mind and heart with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, to make His thoughts our thoughts, His sentiments and dispositions ours, in a word, to make of each of us another Christ. All this, and nothing more, is to be desired in a cleric, an aspirant to Holy Orders. What more could be needed for the making of a good priest?

3. Experience has shown conclusively, that all, who come to the seminary with a right intention and who follow its exercises with a good will, find themselves well prepared at the time of ordination and, almost invariably, are an honor to the priesthood. But experience has taught us likewise that those priests, who are lax and unworthy from the very beginning of their ministry, or who later fall into some disorder, are the very same who, at the seminary, were noted for their negligence and laxity, who made their course without serious reflection, without prevision, without generosity of heart and of will, who wasted time and neglected graces, abused them even, seeking only the pleasure that could be gotten out of the life, heedless of the reproaches of their conscience and ignoring the exhortations

of their directors. It is a tried and true saying, "As the seminarian, so the priest." A good seminarian has the making of a good, zealous priest, while the lukewarm, half-hearted, and distracted seminarian has yet to become a fervent priest.

Third Point. Acknowledge before God the obligation, which you as a seminarian are under, of profiting by the means of instruction and sanctification afforded you at the seminary; "*Ne quis desit gratiae Dei.*" Hebr., XII, 15. Do you realize that you have not been received into this seminary merely to remain as you are, with the sole obligation of not lapsing into sin, but to truly transform yourself, to change radically if need be, to become quite another man, to rid yourself of your many illusions, to cure your weaknesses, to replace your prejudices and preconceived notions with infallible principles and solid convictions, and to ground yourself in Christian virtues even more thoroughly than nature and habit have filled you with defects? Rest assured that you have grace in plenty fo this work, and that, at the end of your course when you shall present yourself for ordination, your conscience will have little with which to reproach you if you have honestly endeavored to

fit yourself for the priesthood as you, with your lights, conceived its sanctity and burden to be: "*Si offeratis caecum ad immolandum, nonne malum est? Et si offeratis claudum et languidum, nonne malum est? dicit Dominus.*" Mal., I, 8.

Read often and attentively the Manual of Piety, especially its chapters on the seminary, the rule, and the manner of performing the principal exercises and monthly retreat. "*Spes messis in semine.*"

MEDITATION XXVI.

WHY SANCTIFICATION IS THE WORK OF THE SEMINARY.

First Point. Adore the spirit of Our Lord as the spirit of holiness and the author of all sanctification: "*Sanctificationum omnium auctor.*" Pontifical. He calls all souls to Christian perfection and gives to everyone abundant means for attaining it; He even aids in the very use of those means. But it is to clerics that the Holy Spirit addresses His most urgent invitations, and on them He bestows His most precious graces. "Holy Father," cried our dear Savior on the eve of His death, "I pray not for the world, but for these whom Thou hast

given me and who have renounced the world that they might be my disciples. Make them to become holy; grant them that true holiness which they must needs have to be pleasing to Thee and faithful to their vocation." *"Sanctifica eos in veritate,"* John, XVII, 17. Thank our Lord for the zeal with which He seeks the sanctification of clerics, and, consequently, for yours. Ask of Him the grace to appreciate the motives you have for complying with His expressed desires.

Second Point. Consider the chiefest motives for working towards your sanctification while in the seminary.

1. First, *the interests of your own soul;* its salvation, its happiness, and its glory. To work for perfection is to make sure of salvation. Peril comes only from neglect, indifference and slothfulness in this one essential. Then, too, you are assured of much real happiness and consolation in this life. God is generous to those who serve Him generously; He loves tenderly those who strive to love Him. In fine, perfection means the greatest measure of glory and happiness in Heaven, for merit, you know, is in proportion to sacrifices made. Wherefore, they who are unselfishly devoted to

Our Lord in this life are to be nearest to Him in the glory of the next.

2. The second motive is *the interest of your ministry.* The Divine Master is not wont to be served or aided by untrained workmen in the accomplishment of His designs. His wish is to have those work for His especial glory who are worthy of this honor by reason of their merits and virtues: "*Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet. Si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert.*" John, XII, 21. "*Si quis ergo emundaverit se, erit vas in honorem sanctificatum et utile Domino, ad omne opus bonum paratum.*" II, Tim., II, 21. There are priests hidden away, isolated, in obscure, unpromising positions, as far as a ministry is concerned. But, if they have true virtue, God does not abandon them or permit them to be without fruit. He brings to them souls to whom they cannot go, and yet for whom they have merited graces. When their sanctity superabounds, it is as a source whence grace flows afar, carrying to the ends of the earth the fecundity of spiritual life. "*Sicut fons aquarum, cujus non deficient aquae.*" Isaias, VIII, 11.

The third motive is, *the interests of those whose*

glory, perfection, and eternal salvation depend on our own personal sanctification. Our Lord first; He gave His life-blood in order to merit the grace for us to become holy, and His glory requires that His sufferings and His death be not in vain. Secondly, the Blessed Virgin, your guardian angel, your patron saints and all the protectors whom you have, whether they be in heaven or on earth; do you think they look on with indifference as you profit or not by the graces which they have obtained for you? Thirdly, the souls whom you will have to enlighten and guide and sanctify in your ministry. Who can tell the number you will save, if you will only be as holy as you certainly can become? Who can know to how many others they in turn may render useful and never-to-be-forgotten service, or how far the good you have done them will propagate, or where it will extend itself? What is certain, though, is this, that the greater the virtue you have, the more useful and fruitful will be your ministry. If you care little about your own sanctification you will care but little, or less about the sanctification of others: *"Quae seminaverit homo, haec et metet, Qui parce seminat, parce et metet; et qui seminat in benedictionibus de benedictionibus et metet."* II Cor., XI, 6.

THIRD POINT. Ask of God the grace never for an instant to lose sight of the work of your sanctification, and have confidence in His grace. Be assured that if but few seminarians become saintly, it is simply because they do not aim at sanctity. "*Secundum propositum nostrum extendit decursus profectus nostri.*" Imit., I, XIX. In learning, one may have good will and yet make little progress, but it is not so in virtue. To virtue, then, turn your application and desires. God will bless your efforts; He will smooth your way, and you will see that He does not wait until you have reached the end to repay you for your trouble or to prove to you His love: "*Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur.*" Matt., V, 6.

The reflections of St. Gregory, on the too superficial anointing at Saul's coronation, and on his later reprobation, made on P. Brydaine, while still a seminarian, a vivid impression. "I feared nothing so much," said he, "for the day of my priesthood, as an insufficiency of grace, '*lenticulam olei.*' To my mind there was no greater peril than, by my own fault, to diminish the number of graces destined for me. For this I was trembling even a few moments before I received the priesthood." Cfr. S. Gregory, *on* I *Kings*, X, 1.

MEDITATION XXVII.

PERSEVERANCE IN VOCATION.

First Point. Admire the wise moderation with which the Savior proceeds in the formation of the ministers to whom He is to entrust His Church. He is in no hurry to attach them to His service or to send them into His vineyard. He begins by trying them. He puts within their reach all the means for their instruction, as well as for cultivating in themselves the proper dispositions, and He observes in what manner they profit by them. It is not until the second year of His preaching that He associates to His ministry a certain number of disciples, giving them the mission of announcing the kingdom of God. And it is only in the third year that He appoints twelve apostles, and moreover, it is not until the end of His life that He gives them their principal powers. Thus does He put in practice that first law which His Apostle sought to impress upon the episcopate; *"Nemini cito manus imposueris."* I Tim., V, 22. Understand that this rule is for the interest of the ordinands, as well of the Church, and ask of the Divine Master the grace never to thwart or hinder His designs.

Second Point. Consider the two opposite but equally striking examples, we find in the apostolic college, of Our Lord's conduct towards those whom He has chosen.

1. Called by Our Lord, or drawn by grace, yet ignorant of the designs of Heaven upon him, *St. Matthias* was among the first to follow Our Lord. He shared in His labors, meditated upon His discourses, studied His example, contemplated His mysteries, and so profited by His society that, when the Savior had, by His Ascension, departed this world, no one was more worthy of consideration among the disciples or seemed better disposed for the mission of preaching the Gospel than he. What a compensation did the Divine Master make him for his devotion and his fidelity? Desirous that all His gifts be of profit and that all His laborers increase their talents, He called this faithful servant to a most elevated office. He makes him of the number of the apostles: entrusts him with the same mission, animates him with the same spirit and honors him with the same privileges: *"Numquid venit lucerna,"* He says in St. Mark IV. 21, *"ut sub modio ponatur aut sub lecto? Nonne ut super candelabrum ponatur?"* He will deal in like

manner with you. As yet, you know not with certainty, whether you will be a priest. At least you are ignorant as to just what work and place you are destined in the holy ministry. But then, do not be disturbed; do not speculate on what is to be your lot; apply yourself only to spending with profit your days in the Seminary, even as the most fervent of your fellow students. And, then, when these are accomplished, and you have acquired the necessary dispositions, a place will not be wanting for you, nor the grace which will enable you to fill it: "*Dico enim vobis, quia omni habenti dabitur et abundabit.*" Luke, XIX, 26. *Qui bene ministraverint, gradum bonum sibi acquirent et multam fiduciam in Christo Jesu.*" I Tim., III. 13.

2. In *Judas* we have an example quite to the contrary. Called to the Apostolate by the Savior Himself, he passed three years in close intimacy with the Master and yet, for all the care and grace bestowed on him, he failed to make any response. His vocation was lost sight of, and he was miserably lacking in appreciation of the favors conferred on him. Whilst the others were heaping up merit, sanctifying themselves for the powers destined them, he, by a daily increasing attachment to the

things of earth and by maintaining intercourse with the enemies of his Master, was preparing to profane them. But God willed to spare His Church this plague, and to spare the world this scandal of a sacrilegious minister among the first representatives of the Savior; and Satan, being possessed of his willing prey, soon precipitated him to the depths of the abyss, "*in locum suum.*" Acts, I, 25. Here, then, is a second lesson for you, no less precious than the first. Rarely, indeed, does abuse of grace reach to this excess, or meet with punishment in so terrible a manner; but, that God ends by rejecting those whom first He had called, that, after opening to them His sanctuary and after conducting them even to the foot of the altar, He banishes them forever, is ordinary enough and seldom fails to come to pass when one enters His service wanting in generosity and at the very first step looks back: "*Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.*" Luke, IX, 62. "*Omni habenti dabitur; ei autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo.*" Matt., XXV, 29. Perhaps you have seen examples of one and the other.

3. Third Point. Have confidence in the goodness of God who abandons none who do not desert

Him, but never cease to be diffident of yourself. *"Etsi irreprehensibilis videatur ingressus et intentio casta, nihilne ultra timendum est?"* says St. Bernard. *"Timendum et maxime. Non enim quicumque spiritu coeperunt, spiritu etiam consummant sed carne nonulli.* Let this alternative, either that you become a holy priest, by profiting by your seminary course, or that you expose your soul to awful peril by negligence and infidelity, let this serve as an incentive, let it urge you continually, to greater perfection. *"Nullus esto Judas."* St. Chrys. The greater has been God's goodness to you, the more have you to fear ennui and relaxation. *"Vide ergo bonitatem et severitatem Dei; in eos quidem qui ceciderunt, severitatem, in te autem bonitatem, si permanseris in bonitate; alioquin et tu excideris."* Rom., XI, 22.

Read, in the New Testament, and reflect upon what the Evangelists tell us of the docility of the Apostles to Our Lord, and of the infidelity of Judas.

"Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam." Apoc., III., 11.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

SIMPLICITY OF DRESS.

First Point. Adore the Son of God made Man, giving His disciples an example of modesty and humility. The Gospels which tell little of His exterior appearance, say little or nothing about His dress, John, XIX, 23; yet we know that He praised the coarse and austere dress of his precursor, Matt., XI, 8; that He wished no one to be solicitous as to what they should wear, Matt., VI, 28; that He Himself was poor and lived accordingly, II Cor., VIII, 9; that He was reduced to the form of a slave, Phil., II, 7; and that often He is seen as the servant of all. Luke, XXII, 27; John, XIII, 4. We can, then, be quite assured that He was in His dress as in everything else, a man of simplicity: "*Apparuit inter homines modestus Dominus majestatis,*" says St. Bernard. Admire His example, so well calculated to humiliate our vanity and pretensions.

Second Point. A cleric should avoid anything in his appearance that would suggest finery, vanity, and love of stylish and worldly apparel.

1. Nothing is more opposed to *the spirit of his state* and to the profession which as a cleric he has

made. *"Non excidat a mente quomodo in tonsura capitis ignominiae saeculari renuntiasti."* Pet. Ales. In taking the cassock we testified that we felt no desire to be of the world; that we were ready to renounce its spirit, its pomps and works; that we would live henceforth only the life of Jesus Christ, as best we might, doing what we could for the glory of God and for the edification of souls: *"Super abrenuntiatione saecularium emisisti vota, quae distinxerunt labia tua. Alligatus es verbis oris tui."* Ibid. But what are we doing if we seek to be noticeable by our appearance, if we desire to appear and dress as young men of the world, if we find pleasure in making ourselves remarkable for fine clothes and stylish taste. *"Cui ex his placere gestis, Deo an mundo?"* St. Bernard. *"De mundo non estis, sed ego elegi vos de mundo."* John, XV, 19; XVII, 14. *"Nolite conformari huic saeculo."* Rom., XII, 2.

2. Nothing is more opposed to *the example of worthy ecclesiastics* or to the practice of those who work with fruit in the service of souls. Which of these has anyone ever known to give undue thought to his appearance, to keep up to fashion, always in style, or, faultlessly so, as the world says?

"Ecce qui in mollibus vestiuntur in domibus regum sunt." Matt., XI, 8. A man of God dresses merely to cover himself, just as he eats only to live; as he does not take food merely for the pleasure it gives, so is he as far from taking vain complacency in his clothes; where others see some honor attached to dress, he occupies himself with the matter only with regret that he must stop and give it a thought. St. Augustine declared he would have nothing to wear which was not of the common sort: *"Fateor vobis: de pretiosa veste erubesco. Non decet hanc professionem. Commune me volo habere quidquid habeo."* Serm. CCLVI.

3. Nothing is less calculated to gain for you the *esteem and respect* which you greatly need in your ministry. *"Absit ut in talibus honorificandum putetis ministerium vestrum. Honorabilis, non cultu vestium, sed ornatis moribus, studiis spiritualibus, operis bonis."* St. Bernard. A prelate of sound sense and much experience once said, "Love of finery and dress is a weakness in a woman, a whim in a man of the world, but in a cleric it is an irregularity; in other words, it is a defect incompatible with the elevation of mind and character indispensable in a minister of God." *"Mollia*

indumenta animi mollitiem indicant. Non tantum curaretur corporis cultus, nisi prius neglecta fuisset mens inculta virtutibus. St. Bernard.

THIRD POINT. Carefully avoid anything like finery in your appearance. *"Non sit extrinsecus capillatura aut indumenti vestimentorum cultus."* I Pet., III, 3. *"Non in veste pretiosa."* I Tim., II, 9. Let your clothes be clean, out of respect for your functions and regard for your neighbors. Let them be simple; nay, and do not be afraid to wear ordinary or even poor materials. Those who have other principles and who give different example, may suit a certain class of people; but if they achieve any success in worldly society, depend upon it, that they are far from achieving a like success, or near it, in the pulpit, or in the confessional, or with the sick. To shine and to edify are two different things, seldom, if ever found in combination. *"Etsi habitus non faciat monachum, oportet tamen ut per decentiam habitus extrinseci morum honestatem intrinsecam clerici ostendant. . . Sic decet animo clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, nihil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum prae se ferant."* Conc. Trent, Sess. 14 and 22.

SECTION IV.

MODELS AND SPECIAL VOCATIONS.

MEDITATION XXIX.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN: HER PRESENTATION.

First Point. Adore God the Father, destining the most holy Virgin Mary to be the queen of the clergy; God the Son, giving her as a mother to His priests in the person of St. John; God the Holy Ghost, making of her soul a perfect model of priestly virtues. Admire also, and venerate this Blessed Virgin offering herself to God at so early an age for service in His temple, choosing Him for her only portion, giving you an example of the holy dispositions with which you ought to present yourself for consecration to the service of the Divine Master. *"Maria optimam partem elegit quae non auferetur ab ea."* Luke, X, 42. Pray to her for a share in her dispositions and graces.

Second Point. Two dispositions, particularly, made Mary's consecration precious and pleasing in God's sight, and the same will recommend your offering to God; they are, *humility and generosity.*

1. Enlightened as she was as to the greatness of God and the nothingness of creatures, how could Mary feel any complacency in her offering, or believe that she was about to bring to God a gift worthy of Him, much less to think that she could rightfully ask any return therefor? Rather, she felt the humiliation of her need. She admired the Divine Goodness who deigned to accept her service, despite its seeming littleness, and in her gratitude she promised Him that she would ever be in His house as the last and lowest of His servants. What, then, should be your sentiments? Can there be any reason wanting why you should humble yourself before God? *"Domine, quid est homo quod memor es ejus? Aut filius hominis quoniam visitas eum?"* Ps. VIII, CXLIII. As creatures, we must with Mary, acknowledge our nothingness; but as sinners, we must sink to a depth of humility where even Mary cannot accompany us. *"Quis sum ego! Qualis ego! Quid non mali ego!. . . Sed misericordiam Dei consecutus sum."* I, Tim , I, 16.

2. As Mary's offering was humbly made, so was it done sincerely, completely, and generously. It did not come merely from the lips, nor was it half-hearted, or made only for a time. She gave herself to God with a full heart, without reserve and forever: *"Tibi dixit cor meum: exquisivit te facies mea; faciem tuam, Domine, requiram."* Ps. XXVI, 8. Mary never regretted or went back upon her words of self consecration; never did she falter in her fidelity or in her love: *"Tu scis quia numquam laetata sit ancilla tua, nisi in te, Dominus Deus!"* Of how many graces, favors, and consolations, think you, was this offering the gauge? *"Quam bonus Israel Deus qui recto sunt corde!"* Ps. LXXII, 1. *"Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum, animae quaerenti illum."* Thren., III, 25. It now remains for you to enjoy the same experience. Let your offering be made with a like sincerity, with the same purity of intention and generosity. Keep your heart detached from all that is not of God. Say to Our Lord from the bottom of your heart, as did Solomon and the Psalmist: *"Domine in simplicitate cordis mei laetus obtuli universa."* I Par., XXIX, 17. *"Dixi Domino: Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. Do-*

minus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei: tu es qui restitues haereditatem meam mihi!" Ps. XV, 2, 5.

Third Point. Since God deigns to be your portion and to receive you into the ranks of His ministry, give yourself to Him with humility and without reserve. He is the only necessary, nay the only true good, the supreme and infinite Good, who makes Himself your possession that He may be your happiness forever. Treat with God as lovingly and as generously as you are capable of, that you may receive your reward an hundredfold in this life, and without measure in the next: "*Da te totum pro toto.*" Guard against any selfish reserve, any self-complacency or self-seeking that would be a hindrance to communion with God. Beg the most holy Virgin Mary to obtain for you a right intention and to give you proper dispositions, and pray that, through her intercession, you may enter the sanctuary with all the blessings you so much need: "*Dominus memor sit sacrificii tui et holocaustum tuum pingue fiat. Tribuat tibi secundum cor tuum, et omne consilium tuum confirmet.*" Ps. XIX, 4, 5.

Take the Blessed Virgin as your model, during

your seminary days, and as your patroness on the day of your receiving Tonsure:

"Dux est virgo sacerdos:
Fas sit quo properat sequi!"

MEDITATION XXX.

THE EXAMPLE OF SAMUEL.

First Point. Adore the Spirit of God, the source of all holiness, given to men through the merits of Our Savior, that men might be reformed to the image and likeness of Jesus, the Divine Model.

This accounts for the fact that saints have so much likeness to each other, and that those of the Old Testament as well as of the New, are held up to us for imitation: *"Nam quos praescivit, hos et praedestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui, ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus."* Rom., VIII, 29. Render homage to the divine Savior who even before His birth was reproduced, and was glorified by types and figures as well as by imitators. Pray that through His grace you may be formed in some measure to the image of His virtues.

Second Point. Immediately after the ordination at Trinity, the Church has read in the Office, the history of Samuel. She thus expresses her desire that those ordained prepare, as did that youth, for their holy destiny. Let us meditate upon his life.

1. Samuel belonged ever to the Lord, and, that he might the more perfectly belong to Him, from the days of His very childhood he gave up everything that men think worthy of their esteem and love. It is true, if we regard his age, that his first consecration was his parents' doing, rather than his own. But the Scripture gives us to understand that he was of one mind with them and that he ratified their offering, in so far as his partially developed mind and tender years enabled him to appreciate the motives which prompted them. At least it is certain that he appreciated the honor and advantage of living in the house of God and that the scandalous conduct of the sons of Heli had no other effect on him than to strengthen and enhance his virtue. "*Filii Heli filii Belial, nescientes Dominum neque sacerdotium. Puer autem erat minister Domini ante faciem Sacerdotis.*" I Kings, II, 11, 12.

2. As soon as he was able to understand the designs of God upon him, he applied himself with all zeal to accomplishing them. The miracle to which he owed his birth, the vow made by his mother in order to conceive him in her womb, the education he had received, the privilege of growing up in the tabernacle precincts and within the very shadow of the Ark, the unhappy state to which he saw the people and religion of Israel reduced, all appealed to him, and required him to make a complete and unreserved consecration of himself to the Lord. At once he complied, fulfilling with a religious docility, under the High Priest, the holy functions neglected or profaned by Heli's unworthy sons: *"Ministrabat ante faciem Domini, accinctus ephod linteo."* II, 18. Thus he passed his youth, increasing each day in grace and wisdom, like the Savior in later days, before God and men: *"Proficiebat atque crescebat et placebat tam Deo quam hominibus."* II, 21.

3. Though rewarded with such precocious wisdom and fervor through a divine revelation, Samuel entertained no vanity, but ever showed himself humble, faithful and courageous in God's service: *"Cognitus est in verbis suis fidelis."* Eccle., XLVI.

He expected that the High Priest would question him, yet his modesty did not hinder him from declaring to that unhappy father the severe judgment his culpable weakness had brought upon him. Thus did the great and renowned prophet prepare himself for the work of restoring the divine worship and destroying idolatry, to govern Israel and consecrate its first kings, and to be their counselor and guide. By the practice of similar virtues and through a like fidelity you, too, will become the object of divine predilection. If you would be blessed by Heaven, as Samuel was, then, like him, set at once about the work of your sanctification. Like him, be docile, disinterested, generous. Love and fear God alone; be ever ready to forego your personal interests in His service for love of Him and for the spiritual welfare of your brethren.

Third Point. Who, were it in his power, would not give to the Church prophets and men of God, such as Samuel, to promote the interests of true religion, to combat impiety and sin? Who, even, would not give to the Sanctuary submissive and docile Levites, with hearts truly detached from all that is not of God, from worldly concerns, from relatives as well as from themselves? You can give,

if you will, at least one such—yourself. Through prayer and good will you can be another Samuel, and obtain from Heaven an increase of holy ministers in the Church. Moreover, rest assured that if you are generous with God, He in turn will be far more generous with you; for God bestows His graces according as we desire them and are faithful to them: "*Sapiens cor suum tradet ad vigilandum diluculo ad Dominum, et in conspectu Altissimi deprecabitur. Si enim Dominus magnus voluerit, spiritu intelligentiae repebit illum et ipse diriget consilium ejus et disciplinam.*" Eccle., XXXIX, 6, 10.

You will be well repaid by a careful reading of the story of Samuel in the First Book of Kings. "*Maledictus dolosus, qui votum faciens immolat debile Domino.*" Malach., I, 14.

MEDITATION XXXI.

VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

First Point. The spirit of Our Lord is a spirit of union as well as of sanctification. If Christ calls souls to sanctification, He gives them abundant aid; He sustains them even, and enthuses them in their practice of perfection. Hence the religious

communities of the Church, ancient, various, and enduring; the type of which is seen in the society founded in Jerusalem on the day after Pentecost. Nothing could be more touching than the picture of it as drawn by St. Luke. How intimate was their bond of union! *"Erat cor unum et anima una."* Acts, IV, 32. What mutual charity and what detachment! *"Habebant omnia communia."* II, 44. What loving confidence in their spiritual superiors! *"Afferebant pretia eorum quae vendebant, et ponebant ante pedes apostolorum."* IV, 34. What zeal, too, for religious practices: *"Quotidie perdurantes in templo, frangentes panem et collaudantes Deum."* II, 46. Finally, what fervor and consolation filled their souls: *"Sumebant cibum cum exultatione et simplicitate cordis."* Ibid. We can realize in some measure, what a source of edification these first have been for the entire Church and with how many preachers, confessors and martyrs they have furnished Her. And this is just what has been reproduced in the establishment of every religious community, and what we can still witness in all such communities as have preserved their pristine spirit. Fortunate, indeed, are those whom God calls to sanctify themselves

thus! But this is not the lot or portion of every soul: *"Unusquisque proprium donum habet ex Deo, alius quidem sic, alius vero sic."* I Cor., VII. It is with the regular life as with the religious celibacy: *"Non omnibus datum est. Qui potest capere capiat."* Matt., XIX, 11.

Second Point. To enter prudently a religious community, three conditions are indispensable:

1. One should be *well grounded in the great Christian truths*, such as the necessity of salvation, the importance of perfection, the uncertain length of life, or at best, its shortness, the real relation of creatures to the Creator, the corruption of the world, the vanity of temporal things, and the infinite prize, eternal happiness. Why is this? Because, on one hand, the religious life has no aim or purpose except to assure the salvation and perfection of those who enter upon it, and because, on the other, if they who embrace it have not solid convictions on these matters and are not thoroughly alive to these truths, neither salvation nor perfection will be the object of their desires or efforts. They will not be happy in their condition nor will they properly attend to their duties. They will have no relish for their exercises, they will lack in fidelity

to the rule, they will shirk the burden they have assumed and will be helpless before difficulties that must arise, because they have neither generosity nor courage. They are weak every way. If one would be a good religious, there is but one thing to start with—one must aspire to personal sanctification above everything else. The solitary of old had the right disposition, for he went about repeating ever to himself: "*Volo salvare animam meam.*" I mean to save my soul at any price.

2. A combined *attraction for poverty, chastity and obedience.* Like the sacred minister the religious binds himself to a life of chastity: but he does more; he contracts the solemn obligation of living in poverty and in obedience to the rules of his order. Thus, by the threefold vow which he takes against the threefold concupiscence, is briefly summarized the sacrifice he makes of himself to God. According as he lives up to his engagement his eternal salvation or damnation will be decided: "*Aut summa perfectio, aut summa damnatio.*" How great, then, must be his charity, since without it he could not live, as now he must in community with others who, though

under the same rules and obligations, are yet each of different character, habits, opinions and tastes. No one would think of belittleing the importance of this virtue of charity even in ordinary life, since without it peace would be impossible. Certainly then it cannot be less so in a community; rather, charity is most essential, for their frequent and intimate intercourse is inevitable between men of contrary dispositions and withal keenly sensitive and of set views.

3. An *unqualified esteem for the work* to which he is about to consecrate his life. If he seeks to enter a teaching order, it goes without saying that he should love study and the work of instructing. If it be a community of preachers, he must have a strong desire for preaching; should it be a society founded for the care of the poor, he ought to be especially inclined to works of mercy. All this is as evident as it is indispensable. The reason is simply that to do a thing well, one must put his heart into his work, and this generally is done only when one sets about a work of his own liking, to which he feels a strong attraction. *"Quo unumquemque suum ducit ingenium, id majore implet gratia."*

Third Point. Realize well what you are required to do, if you feel yourself drawn to the religious state or to community life: do not enter upon either merely through a momentary disgust with worldly life or through a vague fear of the difficulties to be encountered in the ordinary ministry, nor yet through the sole desire for the peace and consolations promised by a life in solitude or community. True, there are considerable advantages and enviable consolations, but these are only for the souls whom God calls to such a life, who seek therein what they ought to seek, who have that esteem and inclination for the practice of religious virtues which give promise of faithful perseverance, even to the very end of their lives. Make sure, then, as far as possible, that you are of this number, examine your dispositions, reflect, pray, seek advice and take it. *"Probate spiritus, si ex Deo sint."* I John, VI.

Read the lives of holy religious, particularly of the founders of orders and communities.

MEDITATION XXXII.

A MISSIONARY VOCATION.

First Point. Adore the Son of God, warning you not to presume on your strength and never to engage yourself in anything without due consideration. The more perfect a state is, and the greater the virtue it requires, the longer and the more seriously should one reflect before embracing it. "*Quis ex vobis,*" says the Divine Master, "*volens turrim aedificare, non prius computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum; ne postea quam posuerit fundamentum, omnes incipiant illudere ei, dicentes quia hic homo coepit aedificare et non potuit consummare?* Luke, XIV, 28–30. If ever it be of consequence to follow this rule, is it not when one contemplates becoming a missionary, to carry the Gospel to infidel countries, where one must lead the life of a veritable Apostle even till death? Thank Our Lord for His counsel, and pray Him to give you at once the prudence to avoid any rash undertaking and the zeal to accomplish unhesitatingly His holy and sovereign will.

Second Point. A vocation to the foreign missions supposes that one has three principal dispositions.

1. An *ardent zeal* for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The only inducement that can induce one to leave his own country and become a preacher of the true faith to infidels, is the hope of saving a certain number and gaining them to God. A true missionary can have no other motive or aim. Such a work, however, is not easily accomplished. Sacrifices alone can effect it; and the first of these, departure, is only the prelude. Only those who set out with, and persist in the determination to spare no cost, will be able to say with the humble assurance of the Apostle that they have never recoiled from privation, suffering of torture, or death itself. "*Ego libentissime impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus.*" II Cor., XII., 15. "*Ita cupide volebamus tradere, non solum Evangelium sed etiam animas nostras.*" I Thess., II, 8.

2. *A particular devotion to the holy Apostles.* If one is called to walk in their footsteps and to reproduce their virtues, can one make a better preparation than by cultivating their acquaintance and insuring their patronage. Study their lives, invoke their help and guidance and venerate them; and then their discourses, their sentiments will and must find an echo in the depths of your soul; their

actions will find their counterpart in your daily life. This done, you will not merely be in sympathy with them, nor in mere admiration of their lives; you will experience their enthusiasm. You cannot do better than to ponder well in your heart their heroic utterances. *"Vae mihi si non evangelizavero!"* I Cor., IX, 16. *"Graecis et barbaris, sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum."* Rom., I, 14. *"Optabam ego anathema esse pro fratribus meis."* Rom., IX, 2. *"Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor?* II Cor., XI, 29, etc.

3. A keen appreciation and *love of the Cross and of martyrdom.* Having this, one need fear nothing. Weariness, discouragement, or distaste will never overcome his spirit; rather, as the days and years go by, he will be found more and more lovingly attached to his ministry. But, if he have not this disposition, let him be fearful from the outset; too soon will he begin to complain, and he will end by regretting his step, or by failing in his resolution at the last moment. It was only because the great St. Paul esteemed and preferred the cross of Jesus Christ above all things else, because in his eyes this life knew no greater honor than to be associated in the sufferings of the Savior, that at

length he could say in all confidence: *"Scio quia tribulationes me manent, sed nihil horum vereor."* Acts, XX, 24. *"Certus sum quia neque mors, neque vita, neque angeli, neque principatus, neque virtutes, neque alia creatura poterit nos separare a caritate Dei."* Rom., VIII, 3, 8.

THIRD POINT. St. Augustine, in response to God's voice calling him to a life of struggle and sacrifice, simply said, *"Domine, da quod jubes, et jube quod vis."* Make this your frequent prayer. Give yourself up to the designs of God and rest assured that if you have His interests and will at heart, He will give you all means to know and accomplish them. *"Dixit Petrus; Domine, si tu es, jube me ad te venire super aquas. Et ipse ait: Veni. Et descendens Petrus de navicula, ambulabat super aquam ut veniret ad Jesum."* Matt., XIV, 28, 29.

Invoke the Holy Apostles daily and love to read the lives of apostolic men: *"Si filius es Apostolorum et Prophetarum, et tu fac similiter."* St. Bernard.

Ceremonial of Ordination to Tonsure

ACCORDING TO THE

PONTIFICAL

AND COMMENTARY THEREON.

PRELIMINARY.

After the *Kyrie Eleison*, the Bishop being seated, with mitre on, the name of each candidate for ordination is read out, to which each individual replies in turn, "*Adsum.*"[1]

ORDINATION TO TONSURE.

The ordinands present themselves vested in the cassock, carrying on their left arms a surplice and in the right hand a lighted candle. As they kneel before the altar, the Bishop rising, says:

V. *Sit nomen Domini benedictum.*

R. *Ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.*[2]

[1] As Abraham at the foot of Mt. Moriah. (Gen., XXII.)

[2] The purpose of the ordination—the glory of God in time and in eternity.

V. *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.*
R. *Qui fecit cœlum et terram.*[1]

Oremus, fratres carissimi,[2] *Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, pro his famulis suis, qui ad deponendum comas capitum suorum pro ejus amore festinant*[3] *ut donet eis spiritum sanctum*[4] *qui habitum religionis in eis in perpetuum conservet*[5] *et a mundi impedimento ac saeculari desiderio corda eorum defendat,*[6]

[1] To give to the Church new ministers is to renew a work altogether divine in its institution.

[2] It was the custom in the early days of the church for those who presided at the Holy Mysteries to thus instruct the people as to what they should ask of God, so that each became interested therein and joined heartily in the common prayer. There are traces of this practice still to be found in the offices for the last three days of Holy week.

[3] The church takes it for granted that the ordinands can be prompted by no other motive than the love of God, and will neither deceive her in this regard nor lie to the Holy Ghost.

[4] Not the spirit of the world, nor the spirit of pride, cupidity, sensuality, business, nor of anything profane, but the spirit of detachment—the mind of Christ.

[5] If this spirit be not congenial and adapted to their dispositions, then they will say as did David when vested in the armor of Saul. "Non possum incedere," (I Kings, XVII,) and like him they will hamper their liberty.

[6] Temptation to inconstancy in the future. Courage is needed to plod steadily along the road to perfection without stopping to look back regretfully; Memores estote uxoris Loth. (Luke, XVII, 32.)

ut, sicut immutantur in vultibus,[1] *ita dextera manus ejus virtutis tribuat eis incrementa,*[2] *et ab omni caecitate spirituali et humana oculos eorum aperiat, et lumen eis aeternae gratiae concedat. Qui vivit et regnat,* etc.

Here the Bishop tonsures the Ordinands. The choir chants the antiphon: *"Tu es, Domine, qui restitues haereditatem meam mihi:"*

Then the first verses of Psalm XV, on the happiness of those who are to belong to God.[3]

Conserva me, Domine,[4] *quoniam speravi in te.*

Dixi Domino; Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges.[5]

Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus, mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis.[6]

[1] This implies that, as was the ancient custom, the ordinands were now vested in the cassock for the first time.

[2] The costume of the cleric is not as those of the theatre—for mere pomp or show. "Ne signum sit sine significato."

[3] The Church suggests these verses to the Tonsured as the best expression of the sentiments which should fill him.

[4] As the three Israelite children in the furnace. Having no warrant for relying upon our own virtue, we must call upon God to protect us even against ourselves.

[5] When we give ourselves to God, though God accepts us, He is not the gainer, but rather we ourselves; "Non ille ex me major, sed ego sine illo minor." (S. Aug.)

[6] "Sanctis:" The Sanctuaries, and the society of those

Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum,[1] *postea acceleraverunt.*

Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus,[2] *nec memor ero nominum eorum per labia mea.*

The antiphon is repeated at the end. The Bishop meanwhile tonsures the Ordinands, cutting off a little of the hair in five places, in the form of a cross, while each candidate pronounces the words:[3]

Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei; tu es qui restitues haereditatem meam mihi.[4]

who pass their lives in giving praise to God: these are to be unceasingly admired and exclusively sought for by those truly called to the priesthood.

[1] "Eorum": It is the worldlings that the Psalmist speaks of. He tells of the miseries with which their lot is seamed and of the death that quickly ends it.

[2] "De sanguinibus" for "sanguinea": homicides, deadly for the soul more often than for the body.

[3] If he should not pronounce them thus, there is no reason to conclude that the ordination is invalid. It is not an essential, it seems, since the tonsure is given by the bishop.

[4] This formula expresses at the same time, that which we promise, which we receive, and which we expect or look for. Others choose for themselves portions which they may enjoy here and only in this life; the portion of the holy ones is the Eternal Lord Himself. "Bibant alii mortiferas voluptates; portio calicis mei Dominus est;" (St. Aug., in *hunc locum.*)

The Bishop rising, makes this prayer:[1]

Oremus.

Praesta, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut hi famuli tui, quorum hodie capitum comas pro amore divino deposuimus, in tua dilectione[2] *perpetuo maneant, et eos sine macula in sempiternum custodias.*[3] *Per Christum.*

After Tonsure, properly so-called, comes the ceremony of investiture. The choir chants the antiphon:

Hi accipient benedictionem a Domino et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo, quia haec est generatio quaerentium Dominum.[4]

Adam pawned to the demon our heritage, the portion that was to be ours in the kingdom of our heavenly Father, says St. Ambrose. Our Lord redeemed it and restored it and more, to those who give themselves to Him.

[1] The Bishop expresses here, in union with the faithful, a prayer in which he exhorts them earnestly to offer all to the Lord.

[2] This, above all, the Church desires for her clergy: constancy and purity of divine love.

[3] "Sine macula"—ambulans in via immaculata, hic mihi ministrabat. Ps. C, 6.

[4] After the sacrifice should come the recompense. But, the reward for the tonsured depends upon the rightness of their views.

Then is chanted Psalm XXIII:[1]

Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus, orbis terrarum et universi qui habitant in eo.[2]

Quia ipse super maria fundavit eum, et super flumina praeparavit eum.[3]

Quis ascendet in montem Domini, aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?[4]

Innocens manibus et mundo corde, qui non accepit in vano animam suam, nec juravit in dolo proximo suo.[5]

Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino, et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo.[6]

Haec est generatio.[7] *quaerentium eum, quaerentium faciem Dei Jacob.*[8]

[1] See a beautiful commentary on this Psalm by Fr. Olier, Traité des saints ordres, p. I, ch. III.

[2] Happy they, whose portion this is! "Quid ei deesse potest qui habentem omnia habet?" (S. Aug.)

[3] The support of this hand ought to suffice us.

[4] Tabernaculum Dei in terra est Ecclesia, says St. Augustine. The Church is holier than the Holy of Holies, and more elevated than Sinai itself.

[5] Non intrabit in eam aliquid coinquinatum, (Apoc., XXI, 27.)

[6] Mercy for the past, blessings for the future.

[7] A chosen few, a celestial household. "Geuus electum, regale sacerdotium." (I Pet., II, 9.) "Primus homo de terra terrenus: Secundus homo coelo coelestis." (I Cor., XV, 47.)

[8] "Qui quaerit invenit." (Matt., VII, 8.)

Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriæ.[1]

Quis est iste rex gloriæ? Dominus fortis et potens: Dominus potens in praelio.[2]

Attollite portas, principes, vestras et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriæ.[3]

Quis est iste rex gloriæ? Dominus virtutum ipse est rex gloriæ.

Gloria Patri.

Then is repeated: *Haec est generatio.*

Then, the Bishop rising and turning to the altar, says:

Oremus.

Then: *Flectamus genua.*

R. *Levate.*

[1] The King of Glory—Jesus Christ entering Heaven with the Church triumphant; and the princes, whom the psalmist addresses, are the Angels. But here these words are applied to the cleric entering into the sanctuary and to the Bishops, the princes of the Church and angels of God on Earth.

[2] Magnificent titles which the cleric can merit in so far as he represents the Savior.

[3] The Tonsured participates in the merits, virtues, and spirit of the Savior as in His crown and royalty.

Then, turning again to the Tonsured, he reads the following prayer.

Adesto, Domine, supplicationibus nostris, et hos famulos tuos benedicere dignare, quibus, in tuo sancto nomine, habitum sacrae religionis imponimus,[1] *ut, te largiente, et devoti in Ecclesia tua persistere, et vitam percipere mereantur aeternam. Per Christum.*

Then he vests each of the Tonsured with the surplice, saying: *Induat te Dominus novum hominem*[2] *qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis.*[3]

[1] The Tonsured, as the religious, receives the habit of his Order. God gave to the sinner, in the person of Adam, a vestment made of the skins of animals as a reminder that he had degraded himself to their level; Jesus Christ revests His ministers in another garb, white and pure, which renders them like to Him in their exterior, and which keeps them ever in mind of their obligation to be like to Him in interior dispositions as well.

[2] The old man will remain always in you, but he should disappear and be, as it were, dead and buried; while the new man, the spiritual, regenerated man recovers and takes his former place and alone be seen to the eyes of all.

[3] The new man is created according to God, that is, reformed to His image, "in consortium et similitudinem naturae," in the practice of true justice and holiness: for the justice whereby one satisfies God, and the holiness whereby one detaches himself from things that are not of God, are the very essence of supernatural or Christian life.

Then the Bishop adds a new prayer:

Oremus. Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, propitiare peccatis nostris et ab omni servitute saecularis habitus hos famulos emunda,[1] *ut, dum ignominiam saecularis habitus deponunt, tua semper in aevum gratia per fruantur: ut, sicut similitudinem coronae tuae*[2] *eos gestare facimus in capitibus, sic tua virtute haereditatem subsequi mereantur aeternam in cordibus. Qui cum Patre,* etc.

After this prayer, the Bishop, being seated, concludes the ceremony with the following advice:

Filii dilectissimi, animadvertere debetis quod hodie de foro Ecclesiae facti estis,[3] *et privilegia clericalia sortiti estis: cavete igitur ne propter culpas vestras illa perdatis,*[4] *et habitu honesto*

[1] The dress of the world, in fact, and the secular life to which it induces, are bound up with a thousand profane occupations unworthy of the character of a minister of God.

[2] It represents, then, the crown of the Savior, a crown of thorns while on earth, and of eternal glory in heaven.

[3] The immunity of clerics formerly recognized and accorded by all Christian states. In fact, it is quite improper and altogether ill becoming, that superiors should be judged by their inferiors or be subject to them for correction.

[4] Through deposition, degradation, or return to the world.

bonisque moribus atque operibus Deo placere studeatis. Quod ipse vobis concedat per spiritum sanctum suum. Amen.[1]

[1] "Ita age et vive ut clericus esse merearis et adolescentiam tuam nulla sorde commacules, ut ad altare Christi quasi de thalamo virgo procedas." (St. Jerome.) "Sic te præpara, sic lege, sic stude, sic vive, sic loquere et exhortare, ut voceris a Deo tamquam Aaron quem elegit ipsum." (Petr. Bles.)

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